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DIVISION OF FOSTER CARE REVIEW

1998-1999 ANNUAL REPORT



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STATE DOCUMENTS

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing that ever does." Margaret Mead*



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

JAMES H. HODGES
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE
POLICY AND PROGRAMS

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

The Honorable Jim Hodges
and Members of the General Assembly

On behalf of the State Board of Directors, I am pleased to report the activities of the Division of Foster Care Review for 1998. From January 1, 1998, through December 31, 1998, local volunteer review board members conducted 7,948 reviews on 4,614 children who remained in the foster care system longer than four consecutive months. Review board volunteers were diligent in their efforts to determine the steps taken by the Department of Social Services towards permanence for these children.

As required by statute, the Division has encouraged the return of children to their natural parents when appropriate; has promoted and encouraged the Department of Social Services to place children with persons suitable and eligible as adoptive parents; has advised foster parents of their rights to petition the Family Court for termination of parental rights and adoption; and has recommended that all efforts be exerted by the Department of Social Services to secure permanent homes for these children.

The Division is committed to continued efforts to improve the delivery of services to foster children and their families in South Carolina. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 734-0480 if you have any questions pertaining to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Denise Barker".

Denise T. Barker
Division Director

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Office of Foster Care Review
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STATE BOARD MEMBERS

as of December 31, 1998

Cecelia Aversa, Chairperson, West Columbia, SC, Second Congressional District

Vacant, First Congressional District

Elizabeth B. Weaver, Easley, SC, Third Congressional District

Mary Lynn Melton, Spartanburg, SC, Fourth Congressional District

Judy M. Hamrick, Gaffney, SC, Fifth Congressional District

Vacant, Sixth Congressional District

James Curtis Harkness, Aiken, SC, At-Large

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Denise T. Barker, Program Director/Medicaid and Training

Beth M. Green, Program Director/Foster Care Review

Melissa W. Dunlap, General Counsel

Dona L. Guffey, Staff Attorney

Tonya P. Landrith, Business Manager

Pam D. Gallion, Administrative Assistant II

Vickie B. Barfield, Medicaid Review Specialist

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Cynthia S. Tillman, Project Administrator

Powanda M. Adams, Review Board Coordinator

Keith A. Campbell, Review Board Coordinator

Stephen C. Clyburn, Review Board Coordinator

Carmen B. Hammett, Review Board Coordinator

Tangee L. Jackson, Review Board Coordinator

Cecelia B. Lee, Review Board Coordinator

Lynn O. Pietropaola, Review Board Coordinator

Gayle Robinson, Review Board Coordinator

Elinor P. Thompson, Review Board Coordinator

Cindy L. Wolthuis, Review Board Coordinator

Lisa A. Hayes, Administrative Specialist

Vicki J. Walker, Administrative Specialist

State of South Carolina

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LOCAL REVIEW BOARD CHAIRPERSONS – 1998

First Judicial Circuit

- 1A Linda J. Knott, St. Matthews
- 1B Linda Wright, Summerville

Second Judicial Circuit

- 2A Charles Weldon, Barnwell
- 2B Ina Arlean Graves, Denmark

Third Judicial Circuit

- 3A Lois McInville, Manning
- 3B Eric Bultman, Sumter

Fourth Judicial Circuit

- 4A Herbert Washington, Bennettsville
- 4B Sarah Campbell, Chesterfield

Fifth Judicial Circuit

- 5A John Kirby, Columbia
- 5B Esther Kelley, Columbia
- 5C Clara DuBard, Columbia
- 5D Annie McNair, Columbia
- 5E James Murray, Columbia

Sixth Judicial Circuit

- 6A Vicki Hinson, Lancaster

Seventh Judicial Circuit

- 7A Betty Groce, Spartanburg
- 7B Cris Foster, Spartanburg

Eighth Judicial Circuit

- 8A Ellie Litts, Hodges

Ninth Judicial Circuit

- 9A Rebecca Gilliard, Charleston
- 9B Winnie Wilson, Moncks Corner
- 9C Jill Stevenson, Charleston
- 9D Joan Mack, Charleston

Tenth Judicial Circuit

- 10A Debbie Thrift, Westminster
- 10B Angie Scott, Anderson

Eleventh Judicial Circuit

- 11A Marion Atkins, Columbia
- 11B Mary Elizabeth Ouzts, Edgefield

Twelfth Judicial Circuit

- 12A Della Baker, Florence
- 12B Ezekial Washington, Florence

Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

- 13A Betsy Weaver, Easley
- 13B Fay Hart, Greenville
- 13C Nancy Jones, Greenville

Fourteenth Judicial Circuit

- 14A Jeanette Ferguson, Allendale
- 14B Jessica Murphey, Hilton Head

Fifteenth Judicial Circuit

- 15A Myra Dingle, Pawleys Island
- 15B Mary Gerald, Loris
- 15C Al Fanshaw, Conway

Sixteenth Judicial Circuit

- 16A Nadara Andrews, Rock Hill

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every child in South Carolina deserves the opportunity to grow up knowing the many advantages of a safe, secure, healthy, permanent family. Unfortunately, many children do not have such an opportunity. From January 1, 1998, to December 31, 1998, the Foster Care Review Board reviewed 4,618 children whose lives revolved around the impermanence of foster care. Although foster care was designed to be a temporary, time-limited situation for children who must be removed from their homes; too many of these children lose their childhood waiting for permanent families. As of December 31, 1998, 1,741 children reviewed had already spent more than two years in foster care. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of these children were less than twelve years old.

The Foster Care Review Board provides an external system of accountability and advocacy for children and families involved with the foster care system. The Review Board looks at the entire system affecting the children and their families, identifies deficiencies, and advocates for due process and quality service delivery. During 1998, post-review referrals and advocacy efforts were initiated a total of 1,858 times for children reviewed by local boards. These efforts were made to address identified concerns and to advocate for permanence for children in our foster care system.

There are thirty-six local review boards across the state that conduct semi-annual case reviews of all children who have resided in foster care more than four consecutive months. There is at least one local review board in each judicial circuit. The number of boards is determined by the number of children who are in foster care in each circuit. Each local board is comprised of five members who must be residents of the circuit they represent. The 180 local board members are appointed to serve on local boards by the Governor upon the recommendation of their legislative delegations. Utilizing local citizens in the review process for children in foster care promotes community awareness and responsibility for addressing the problem of child abuse and neglect.

The Foster Care Review Board is supported by a seven member State Board. The State Board meets quarterly and is responsible for reviewing and coordinating the activities of the local review boards and making recommendations in an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly with regard to foster care policies, procedures, and identified deficiencies of agencies which arrange for foster care of children. The State Board makes recommendations regarding the foster care system based on trends noted subsequent to the statistical analysis of deficiencies identified during individual case reviews conducted by local review boards. The State Board is also responsible for promulgating regulations, upon recommendation of the Division Director, to carry out the mission of the organization.

Pursuant to a contract with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the Review Board has developed and implemented a Medicaid Quality Assurance review process for children placed in Medicaid funded therapeutic placements. This quality review system has been incorporated into the Review Board's current structure and has been operational since 1992. During 1998, twenty-five percent (25%) of the children reviewed by local boards were in therapeutic placements funded by Medicaid.

Participation in court proceedings to present the recommendations issued by local review boards and address barriers impeding progress has proven an effective way to advocate for permanency for children lingering in the foster care system. The Review Board has legal standing in Family Court as a party in interest. During 1998, Review Board legal staff participated in seventy-three court proceedings involving children reviewed by local boards.

Each year, pursuant to statute, the State Board of Directors makes recommendations to the Governor and to the General Assembly with regard to the foster care system in South Carolina. These recommendations are based on a combined analysis of foster care cases reviewed by the thirty-six local review boards and data collected through related research. The two recommendations made for 1998-99 point out the need for enhanced adherence to recent statutory revisions to the South Carolina Children's Code and the need for all entities with responsibilities for the well-being of foster children to fully utilize and recognize the value and benefit of citizen review in South Carolina. Without a unified effort on the part of all child serving systems, the same frustrations will continue to hinder progress for children in South Carolina.

In June 1998, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted statutes to comply with the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. The Adoption and Safe Families Act addresses the importance of permanence for children in our foster care system. The law seeks to address safety issues for children and promotes adoption for children who cannot be reunited with their biological families in a timely manner. The required enhancement of adoption services will provide children who cannot return to their families a chance to achieve a permanent home within a reasonable time and prevent these children from spending large segments of their childhood in the foster care system. The Act shortens time frames for permanency hearings and stipulates new case plan and review requirements to facilitate timely permanent placements for children in foster care. South Carolina revisions to the Children's Code during 1997 were consistent with many of the provisions required under the Adoption and Safe Families Act.

The Review Board remains committed to working collaboratively with the Department of Social Services, Guardian *ad Litem* Programs, local Foster Parent Associations, and other child welfare entities to address systemic issues impacting the child welfare system. One part of this collaborative effort is the Review Board's routine participation in the certification training of new caseworkers at the South Carolina Department of Social Services and training for individual counties and regions as requested. During 1998, 175 caseworkers participated in training provided by the Review Board. Through this effort toward enhanced understanding and improved communication, we have learned that working together we do make a difference in the lives of children and families across South Carolina.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Division of Foster Care Review provides an external system of accountability and advocacy for children and families involved with the foster care system. The Division utilizes panels of community volunteers to promote safe, permanent homes for children in foster care in a timely manner and to increase public awareness regarding the impact of child abuse and neglect.



HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the early 1970's in South Carolina, many child welfare professionals and citizen groups began advocacy efforts on behalf of children in the foster care system. These efforts resulted from their concern over the plight of the child adrift in the foster care system. The ultimate result of these efforts was the establishment of the South Carolina Children's Foster Care Review Board System in 1974, the first such organization in the nation.

Six major private organizations between 1970 and 1974 spearheaded the initial efforts to obtain permanent homes for children in foster care. These organizations were the American Civil Liberties Union, the South Carolina Council for Human Rights, the South Carolina League of Women Voters, the Midlands Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the South Carolina Youth Workers Association and Helping Hands of Aiken County. Child psychiatrists, child psychologists, social work professors, law professors, and various church leaders also participated as private citizens to help give direction to the project.

Research to document the condition of foster care in South Carolina was a primary focus of these organizations. Four studies were done in cooperation with Representative Carolyn Frederick, Vice-Chairperson of the South Carolina General Assembly's Study Committee on Legal and Legislative Matters Pertaining to Children. The results of these four studies showed the following:

- Seventy-six percent (76%) of the children in the Department of Social Services foster care program would neither return home nor be adopted under the existing system. Services were not being provided to the parents by the system to facilitate return home, and no efforts were made to free many children eligible for adoption under the abandonment statute.
- A survey of fourteen private and three public institutions, formerly known as orphanages, showed that the Department of Social Services placed forty-three percent (43%) of the children while private placements accounted for fifty-seven percent (57%) of the children placed. Twenty to fifty percent (20-50%) of these children were eligible for adoption under the abandonment statute; however, none of these institutions stated that adoption was one of their services. In addition, most of these institutions offered no services to families to enable these children to return home.

- Forty-three percent (43%) of the children in foster care had been in two or more foster placements and eighteen percent (18%) had been in three or more.
- No method existed to keep track of children in foster care. The courts expressed concern about children being lost in the system. Even when children were freed for adoption, the courts had no way of knowing if the children had been placed adoptively.
- The cost to taxpayers for keeping children in foster care was growing steadily with no resolution in sight.
- Children were suffering irreparable psychological damage as victims of foster care drift.

The findings from these studies clearly indicated the need for a system to monitor the cases of children in foster care to achieve appropriate permanent placements for these children. Thus, a statewide foster care review board system was legislated by the 1974 General Assembly. In March of 1975, Governor James Edwards, by Executive Order, established the Office of Child Advocacy as a division of the Office of the Governor. This Executive Order charged that the Office of Child Advocacy establish and coordinate the Children's Foster Care Review Board System and act as ombudsman on behalf of the abused, neglected, abandoned and dependent children of the State. The initial funding for the Review Board System as part of the Office of Child Advocacy was shared by the State and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

The Children's Foster Care Review Board System was fully funded by the General Assembly as a separate state agency in 1977. The Office of Child Advocacy existed as a program of the Review Board System until 1980, at which time it was returned to the Governor's Office. While a part of the Review Board System, the Office of Child Advocacy conducted an ombudsman program for children in general and a training program in the prevention and identification of child abuse and neglect for hospitals and other organizations upon request.

In 1985, the Review Board System was placed under proviso legislation in order to restructure and reorganize the Agency. Permanent legislation and regulations passed by the General Assembly in 1986 restored the Agency to permanent status. South Carolina state government restructuring in July 1993 returned the Foster Care Review Board to the Governor's Office as a separate division under the Office of Executive Policy and Programs.

The Division of Foster Care Review is currently comprised of a staff of twenty-one serving thirty-six review boards across the State. The Review Board System reviews the cases of approximately 5,000 children in foster care bi-annually; statistically evaluates the state of foster care in South Carolina; and makes recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly and child-caring facilities as outlined by South Carolina law.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR THE AGENCY

Section 20-7-2376 *et seq.*, of the South Carolina Code of Laws, creates the Children's Foster Care Review Board System and establishes the Division to administer case reviews. The Division is supported by a State Board which consists of seven members, all of whom must be past or present members of a local review board. There must be one member from each congressional district and one member from the State at-large, all appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Members of the State Board serve four-year terms and until their successors are appointed and qualify. A chairperson is elected from the membership of the State Board for a two-year term.

The State Board is responsible for:

- the promulgation of regulations, upon recommendation of the Division Director, pursuant to the provisions of South Carolina Code of Laws Section 20-7-2376 *et seq.*, relating to the functions, policies, and procedures of the Review Board System;
- the promulgation of regulations, upon recommendation of the Division Director, to provide for review of necessary reports and other information required from state, county and private agencies and institutions, and to report to the Family Court on the status of court ordered treatment plans;
- the dissemination of the annual report to the Governor and General Assembly which includes recommendations regarding foster care policies, procedures, and any deficiencies of public and private agencies and institutions which arrange for foster care for children, and the activities of the Review Board System;
- the review and coordination of the activities of the local review boards; and
- the creation or dissolution of local review boards as necessary to maintain appropriate caseloads for each board.

There are thirty-six local review boards, each composed of five members, with at least one local board in each of the sixteen judicial circuits throughout the state. Board members are appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of their respective legislative delegations. South Carolina Code Section 20-7-2385 provides that the appointments from Dorchester and Georgetown Counties' are governed by provisions of Act 512 and Act 515 of 1996, respectively, which allows their county councils to make recommendations.

The functions and duties of local review board members are as follows:

1. To review every six months, but no less frequently than once every six months, the cases of children who have resided in public foster care for a period of more than four consecutive months and to review every six months the cases of children who have resided in private foster care for a period of more than six consecutive months to determine what efforts have been made by the supervising agency or child-caring facility to acquire a permanent home for the child.
2. In private foster care cases, review boards will recommend continued placement in the child-caring facility unless the parents are able to resume care, in at least those instances when:
 - children are privately placed in privately owned facilities or group homes; and
 - a notarized Affidavit of Summary Review is executed by the child-caring facility and is valid on its face; and
 - the Affidavit of Summary Review is submitted to the board every six months. It must be accepted by the board if it attests to the statutorily mandated conditions and is valid on its face.¹
3. Except as provided in subsection (2), local review boards are to encourage the return of children to their natural parents. However, if during a case review the local review board determines that this return is not in the best interest of the child, they must recommend to the appropriate agency that action be taken for a maximum effort to place the child for adoption.

¹ Effective January 1, 1994, children privately placed in private children's homes were no longer reviewed by the Foster Care Review Board. Statutory authority was granted to the Review Board in Proviso #6DD.39 of the Fiscal Year 93/94 budget to cease these reviews. The General Assembly believed it to be a more appropriate use of state dollars to focus reviews on the cases of children who are in the custody of the State rather than private cases.

4. To promote and encourage all agencies and facilities involved in placing children in foster care to place children with persons suitable and eligible as adoptive parents.
5. To advise foster parents of their right to petition the Family Court for termination of parental rights and for adoption and to encourage foster parents to initiate these proceedings in an appropriate case when it has been determined by the local review board that return to the natural parent is not in the best interest of the child.
6. To recommend that a child-caring facility or agency exert all possible efforts to make arrangements for permanent foster care or guardianship for children for whom return to natural parents or adoption is not feasible or possible as determined during a case review by the local review board.
7. To report to the State Office of the Department of Social Services and other adoptive or foster care agencies any deficiencies in these agencies' efforts to secure permanent homes for children. These deficiencies are identified in the local boards' reviews of these cases.

Case findings or recommendations of a local review board are advisory. Any person or agency aggrieved by an action or recommendation of a local review board may seek relief by petition to the family court of that county which then issues a rule to show cause that states why the action or recommendation of the local review board should not be set aside or modified. The Foster Care Review Board also may participate in judicial reviews of a child's case, but will file a motion to intervene if it intends to become a party to the action.

No person may be employed by the Division or serve on the state or a local foster care review board if the person:

1. is the subject of an indicated report or affirmative determination of abuse or neglect as maintained by the Department of Social Services in the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect pursuant to Section 20-7-680; or,
2. has been convicted or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to an "offense against the person" as provided for in Title 16, Chapter 3; or, an "offense against morality or decency" as provided for in Title 16, Chapter 15; or, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, as provided for in Section 16-17-490.

Before a person is employed by the Review Board or before an appointment or reappointment is made to the State Board or a local foster care review board, the Review Board submits the name of the potential employee or board member to the Department of Social Services for a records check of indicated reports or affirmative determinations from the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect and to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division for a criminal records background check to verify the applicant's status.

1998-1999 FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Pursuant to South Carolina Code Section 20-7-2376 *et seq.*, the South Carolina Board of Directors for the Review of Foster Care of Children annually makes recommendations to the Governor and to the General Assembly with regard to the foster care policies, procedures, and practices of public agencies which arrange for the foster care of children. These recommendations are determined through analysis of foster care cases reviewed by the thirty-six local review boards and data collected through research and studies.

The personal, first-hand interviews of caseworkers, children, parents, foster parents and other interested parties give local board members an in-depth look at individual cases. The statistical data compiled from the review of foster care cases allows the local boards to develop a general view of the system operating on behalf of the individual child. The State Board presents the combined analysis of 1998 review-related information and information obtained from the Review Board's participation in other aspects of the child welfare system as the 1998-1999 annual recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION I

The Review Board recommends that the South Carolina Department of Social Services, the Family Court, and guardians *ad litem* appointed to represent children in abuse and neglect proceedings in South Carolina, strictly adhere to the statutory requirements of South Carolina Children's Code.

Legislative History

During 1998, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted changes to bring South Carolina into compliance with the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. In 1997, prior to the implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the South Carolina General Assembly had enacted changes in the permanency planning statutes to include adoption assessments and child-specific recruitment. These revisions to the South Carolina Children's Code contain requirements for implementing permanent plans for children in foster care by providing timely and quality hearings, child-specific adoption recruitment and thorough adoption assessments for children who cannot return to their families.

Legal Issues

- Legal concerns indicating a lack of compliance with statutory requirements comprised forty-five percent (45%) of the total Areas of Concern identified by local review boards during reviews conducted in 1998. This represents a fifteen percent (15%) increase in the number of legal concerns identified in 1997 concerning the same statutory requirements.

"The Review Board is the only body that pulls together information from parents, children, foster parents, guardians ad litem, caseworkers and other interested parties to make an in-depth case assessment related to permanency for the child in the form of a recommendation to the Family Court judge." Local review board member

- Review Board data for 1998 indicates that permanency planning hearings were not held as per statutory time requirements in 1,278 reviews of children conducted by local review boards. This number represents thirteen percent (13%) of the total Areas of Concern identified at foster care reviews during 1998.
- Review Board data for 1998 indicates in 763 reviews of children conducted by local review boards that timely merits hearings were not held. This number represents eight percent (8%) of the total Areas of Concern identified at foster care reviews during 1998.

"Good family courts can lead families through a crisis in a sensitive and constructive way as opposed to providing a battleground for human emotions where children are most often the weapons in the battle." William E. Gladstone, Administrative Judge, Family-Juvenile Division, Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida

Adoption Assessment and Recruitment Issues

- Review Board data indicates a twenty-three percent (23%) increase in the number of children leaving foster care in 1998 to go into permanent, adoptive homes when compared to 1997 data. Data for 1998 includes a remaining number of finalized adoptions that were the result of the South Carolina Families for Kids Program.

"Every year thousands of children in North America spend years in substitute care waiting for a forever family. Those who adopt these "special needs" children face unique challenges, but they, like their children, also experience tremendous rewards." North American Council on Adoptable Children, Voices From the Heart (1996)

- Review Board data for 1998 indicates that thorough adoption assessments and child-specific recruitment were not conducted as required by statute in 372 reviews of children conducted by local review boards.

"When I was four years old, it didn't matter to me that someone was getting a research grant to study the effects of foster care on childhood development. What I wanted was a last name."² Conna Craig, Institute for Children, adoptee and adoption advocate

- Review Board data for 1998 indicates that approximately ten percent (10%) of the children for whom local review boards recommended termination of parental rights and adoption did not receive thorough adoption assessments. Pursuant to South Carolina Code Section 20-7-766, a thorough adoption assessment is to include conducting and documenting face-to-face interviews with the child, foster care providers, and other significant parties.

"Children need families for healthy physical, mental, social, moral, and emotional development...At the heart of concern about contemporary families is the awareness that children need committed, supportive caregivers who will be with them throughout their development."³

² Craig, C., What I Need Is A Mom, *Policy Review*, Heritage Press, Summer 1995

³ Andrews, A. & Morrison, B. *The Changing American Family: Impact on South Carolina's Children*, Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC. (1997)

*"Sixty percent (60%) of the homeless people in New York City are products of the foster-care system; eighty percent (80%) of those in the prison system in the United Kingdom are reported to have been in foster care."*⁴ Gregory Keck, PhD., child therapist

- Review Board attorneys participated in seventy-three (73) statewide Family Court hearings during 1998. At a majority of the permanency planning hearings, thorough adoption assessments were not conducted if a relative had been located for a child. Relatives were not considered as adoptive resources for children who could not return to their birth parents. South Carolina Code Section 20-7-766 requires that adoption be assessed prior to selecting another plan for the child if the child is not to be returned home.

"Legislative changes alone will not cause more children to be placed adoptively." Local review board member

- Review Board data for 1998 indicates that there has been a twenty-four percent (24%) increase in the number of adoption recommendations made by local review boards when compared to 1997 recommendations for adoption. These numbers indicate the growing number of children who wait to have adoptive families identified.

*"In order to meet the challenge of the growing need for adoptive homes, agencies must develop an innovative recruitment system. This system should include general, child specific and targeted recruitment. Targeted recruitment has proven to be the most effective means of attracting the right families for particular children and teens."*⁵ Dr. Denise Goodman, independent consultant focusing on foster care and adoption issues

- According to the South Carolina Council on Adoptable Children, recent Internet recruitment efforts generate approximately 400 inquiries per month on featured children. More emphasis on staffing, planning, action and follow-up to successfully utilize this overwhelming response must be given top priority by the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

⁴ Keck, G. & Kupecky, R., *Adopting the Hurting Child*, Pinon Press, Colorado, 1995,

⁵ Goodman, D. Recruitment, Training and Support: The Essential Tools of Foster Care, published by *Family to Family: A Project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*, March 1998

*"For 15 years, I was waiting for one family, and in two months, because of the Net, I had three families...I read about each of the families and chose one....the adoption is final now and I don't have to worry about looking for a family."*⁶ Daron Cooper, 16 year old adoptee

- Review Board data indicates that 2,839 children reviewed during 1998 spent longer than twelve months in foster care. Research shows that the longer children remain in foster care and the older they get, the less likely they are to be placed in a permanent home. The United States Children's Bureau estimates that, as of January 1999, there are 110,000 children waiting to be adopted. Fifty percent (50%) of these 110,000 children have been in foster care for thirty months or longer.

"There is still a mindset that teenagers are not good candidates for adoption. I can't think of a group of children who need the permanence of adoption more than our teenagers." Local review board member

Case Planning Issues

- Programmatic Areas of Concern comprised fifty-five percent (55%) of the total Areas of Concern identified at foster care reviews in 1998. These concerns primarily relate to deficiencies in case planning.

"Overall, agencies we review don't 'embrace' our role, but there are some who see the critical need for system oversight." Local review board member

- Review Board data for 1998 indicates twenty percent (20%) of the Areas of Concern identified by local review boards resulted from incomplete or inappropriate plans or delays in implementation of plans. South Carolina Code Section 20-7-764 requires that each child's plan specify the services to be provided to the parents or guardians to assist them in accomplishing

⁶ Cooper, D., Because of the Net, I Found a Family, *SC Youth Connected*, Summer 1999, SC Department of Social Services

objectives, time frames for completion, as well as their responsibilities for financial support and visitation.

"Using foster care review to monitor good practice is a powerful tool to improve the lives of children." Sarah Greenblatt, National Center for Permanency Planning

- In 1998, nine percent (9%) of the areas of concern identified by local review boards indicated that case plans for children and families were incomplete or inappropriate. Specifically, the plans presented by the agency may not have contained treatment objectives related to the reason for the child's removal. Plans may not have been implemented with birth parents, or may not address absentee parents. Non-custodial parents, or incarcerated parents, may not have been offered a treatment plan at all, or responsibilities for visits and child support may not have been included as required by statute.

*"Written (case plans) need to be developed by parent and worker together to specify what each will do in the effort to reunify the family. It has long been known that this simple technique speeds case movement, clarifies expectations, empowers parents and helps them focus on discrete tasks."*⁷ Theodore Stein

- Review Board data for 1998 indicates twelve percent (12%) of the statewide Areas of Concern were noted because progress reports from treatment providers were not available. South Carolina Department of Social Service's policy requires monitoring of service delivery on a quarterly basis, and continuous follow up to assure receipt of reports from providers for purposes of evaluating the family and child's progress as well as progress toward the permanent plan.

"Whenever there is not an overseeing body or board, bureaucracies tend to lose perspective. They begin to disregard policy and purpose, and begin to let personal frustration seep in. Somehow the best interest of the child gets lost." Local review board member

⁷ Stein, T. & Gambrill, E., "Facilitating Decision-Making in Foster Care: The Alameda Project" Social Service Review, Vol. 51,3, September, pp. 502-513.

- A lack of progress in achieving the permanent plan was identified as an area of concern at 881 reviews of children in 1998, which comprised nine percent (9%) of the state areas of concern in 1998. The Adoption & Safe Families Act, as well as South Carolina statutes, prohibit extended delays which keep children in foster care indefinitely. Delays in providing children with permanent homes increased three percent (3%) when compared to 1997 data.

"I want to put some permanency into foster children's lives, be it back with their own families or adoptive families. I just want to make sure they have some place to belong." Local review board member

RECOMMENDATION II

The Review Board recommends that all entities with responsibilities for the well being of foster children in South Carolina work collectively with the Foster Care Review Board in an effort to fully utilize and recognize the value and benefit of citizen review in South Carolina.

- The Review Board process provides internal and external opportunities for accountability of services and permanency planning for all children reviewed. Citizen review boards in each judicial circuit in South Carolina conduct in-depth participatory reviews with all interested parties bi-annually for all children spending longer than four months in foster care.

"The Review Board is extremely effective in holding the various agencies accountable to given criteria and in preventing the child from becoming lost in the system. It could be a vital force in meeting federal and state mandated time limits for permanency if it is given the credit and respect it is due." Local review board member

- The Review Board maintains a comprehensive statewide data system on all children reviewed. Critical data from each review is collected and in turn forwarded to the South Carolina Department of Social Services. More useful application of current, or other identified data, should be utilized to facilitate positive change in South Carolina's child welfare system.

"It is crucial to the health of a community that its citizens get involved in the challenges facing its families." Local review board member

- Local review boards are the only source of a concise summary of information gathered from interested parties participating in an informal, non-judicial review setting. These summaries are sent to the agencies reviewed and to the Family Court, as required by statute.

"Foster Care reviewers are one of the few institutions where the problems of the family, the efforts of the State, and the work of the judiciary meet. Reviewers are able to see what is working and what is wrong." Chief Justice Robert N. Wilentz, New Jersey Supreme Court

- Due to the high frequency of staff turnover in the child welfare system, the Review Board's information from these reviews is frequently the only consistent source of continuing information related to a child's journey through the foster care system.

"The strongest indicator of state's prevention efforts was found to be the extent to which the values were supported by citizen groups. The public media is a powerful tool; the ability to work with them is a skill that should be considered necessary for child welfare practitioners."⁸ Krishna Samantrai

- Review board members bring various perspectives and backgrounds to the review process. This diversity helps to broaden views as important decisions are made and provides a wide range of valuable community resources to every county reviewed.

"Government bureaucracy is most often impersonal. Citizen volunteers can aid the Department of Social Services personnel with vital input from the community through their hands-on support of the services given to our children." Local review board member

⁸ Samantrai, K., "To Prevent Unnecessary Separation of Children and Families: Public Law 96-272 – Policy and Practice" *Social Work*, Vol. 37, 4, pp. 295-302. (1992)

- The Review Board process brings community volunteers in touch with the foster care system and maintains an unbiased focus on the best interest of the child.

"With your first-in-the-nation citizen's foster care review board program, I know that South Carolina can be outstanding in the use of volunteers in the child welfare system. These volunteers represent the best our society has to offer children. They work for us and our children, and they become an informed public and inform the public. In effect, they become a constituency for children." William E. Gladstone, Administrative Judge, Family-Juvenile Division, Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida

LOCAL FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS

The 180 volunteers who serve on local foster care review boards are the power that drives the Division of Foster Care Review. The commitment and dedication afforded to the child welfare system in South Carolina by these concerned community advocates is unmatched. During 1998, members serving on local foster care review boards donated 9,808 hours of volunteer service to children and families in South Carolina through their work on local boards. These volunteer hours do not include the many other ways that local board members advocate for children, families, and system reform outside of their monthly meetings.

There are four major areas in which citizen involvement in the third party review process is beneficial. First, the citizens involved in an on-going program of foster care review help to educate their local communities as to the needs of children and families in their areas. A second important component is the strong advocacy skills used by these volunteers to bring change to a large, unwieldy bureaucracy. Informed citizens form a constituency for foster children, for the State legislature, leaders of state government agencies, the family court, their local communities, and their own families. Third, the citizen reviewer brings an objective view to the case review process by having a perspective that reflects no vested interest in any one dimension of the system. Finally, citizen participation in the child review process draws the community focus to children's issues. This involvement effectively broadens the base of accountability for all public and private service providers operating on behalf of children in South Carolina.

The unique position afforded to board members through their service on local boards allows them to penetrate the veil of confidentiality that hides children in foster care and to then appropriately advocate on their behalf. The South Carolina citizen review system is an outstanding example of the way public/private partnerships can work together toward a common goal.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS ON SELECTED VARIABLES RELATED TO 1998 REVIEW BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND STATISTICS

As of December 31, 1998

CATEGORY	1998 TOTALS	% OF 1998 TOTAL
Number of Local Board Seats	180	100%
Active Members	163	90%
Appointment Vacancies	17	11%
Expired Terms	55	34%
Members Attending 2/3 of Meetings	138	85%
Perfect Attendance	49	30%
Female Board Members	123	76%
Male Board Members	38	24%
Minority Board Members	58	36%
Non-Minority Board Members	103	64%

The following Position Description outlines the purpose, duties, and eligibility requirements for local review board members.

POSITION DESCRIPTION - LOCAL REVIEW BOARD MEMBER

JOB PURPOSE

Under limited direction from the Division of Foster Care Review, each volunteer actively participates in case reviews of children in foster care. Volunteers attend regular review board meetings and participate in board decisions on children reviewed. Community input is utilized by board members in assessing steps taken by custodial agency to facilitate permanence for children in foster care. Reviews conducted by review board volunteers fulfill the federal and state statutory requirements for third party review of children in foster care.

JOB DUTIES

1. Formulates recommendations for permanent plans for cases reviewed; addresses violations of law and policy found in cases reviewed and addresses barriers to permanence that may exist.
2. Examines and evaluates documents relevant to a child's case to determine efforts made by the placing agency towards permanence for the child. These documents include, but are not limited to, case plans, court orders, psychological evaluations, and related professional reports.
3. Conducts interviews and gathers information from interested parties attending reviews for the purpose of determining efforts toward permanence for the child. These interested parties include, but are not limited to, birth parents, foster parents, caseworkers, casework supervisors, adoption workers, professional treatment staff, attorneys and Guardians *ad litem*.
4. Evaluates and assesses the status of court ordered treatment plans on individual cases reviewed.
5. Participates as necessary in court hearings involving children reviewed.

What knowledge, skills and abilities are needed by an individual for appointment to this position? Where/how would an individual normally acquire these skills, abilities and knowledge?

Service on a local board is a volunteer position. Members are recommended for appointment by local legislative delegations and appointed for service by the Governor. The main requirements are an interest in children and a willingness to commit the time needed for service.

Describe the training and supervision a volunteer receives in order to do this job.

All appointees operate in a volunteer capacity with limited supervision. Orientation and basic certification training courses are offered within the first year of service with on-going annual training thereafter. Each local board is assigned a professional staff person who acts as a resource and coordinator for the board.

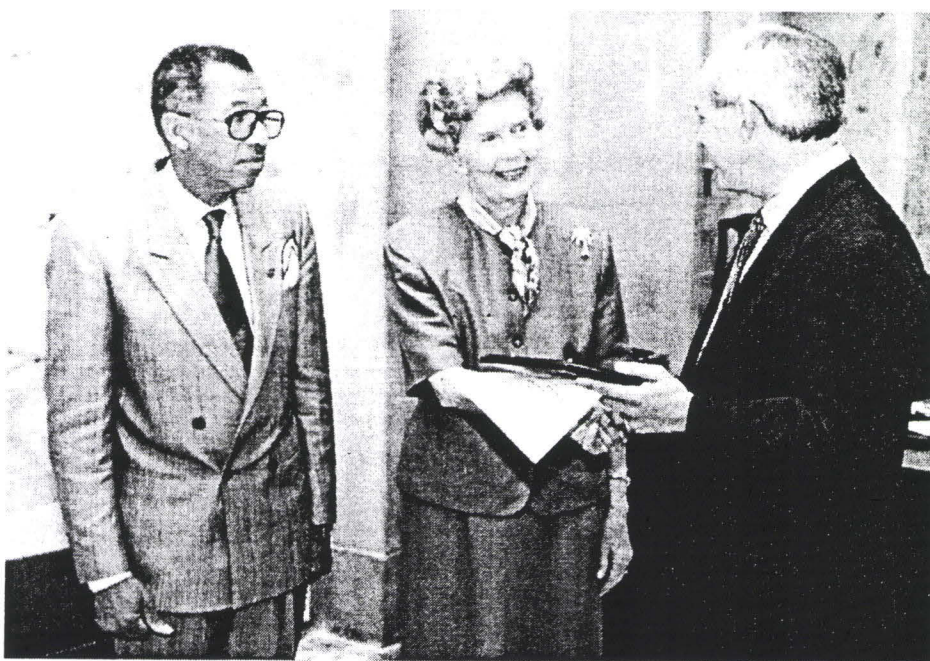
1998 REVIEW BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Each year the State Board of Directors recognizes one individual serving on a local review board who has gone above and beyond their routine service as a board member to improve the lives of children in South Carolina. This person is nominated for this honor by local board members and staff. The qualifications of nominees are reviewed by a selection committee comprised of one State Board member, two review board members who were previously selected as Review Board Member of the Year, and three staff members. The committee then presents a qualified individual to the State Board for approval.

The person chosen as Review Board Member of the Year receives special recognition from the Division and special coverage of the award presentation is featured in the division newsletter. The name of each yearly recipient is added to a continuing wall plaque maintained in the Review Board office.

Mrs. Esther Kelly of Review Board 5B in Richland County was selected as the 1998 Review Board Member of the Year. Esther has served as a faithful and dedicated local board member since her original appointment to Board 5B in 1988. Esther is a strong "behind the scenes" advocate for children and she is not one to brag or boast about what she does to help others. She continues to donate time and money to jump-start special projects for foster children in Richland County. Some of these include organizing Christmas gifts, making arrangements to have school supplies donated in the fall and lining up donations that make it possible for foster children to attend summer camp.

As in years past, the Review Board is fortunate to have not only Esther, but so many other wonderful volunteers working to make South Carolina a better place for children in foster care.



Governor Jim Hodges presents Esther Kelly with the 1998 Review Board Member of the Year Award. Senator Kay Patterson, Chairperson of the Richland County Legislative Delegation, looks on.

1998 Review Board Community Service Projects

The Foster Care Review Board has many volunteers who express a desire to do more for foster children in their communities than review cases each month. Local review board members have resources and connections that reach far beyond the five people who make up each board. During 1998, many board members engaged these resources through joint service projects in an effort to provide additional benefits to the children in care.

Eighteen local review boards worked with their communities, churches, civic groups, friends, families, and their county Departments of Social Services to develop service projects and to show special appreciation to county caseworkers. Each of these efforts was made in an attempt to utilize the wealth of resources statewide to accomplish great things for children in foster care. A few examples of the service projects initiated and developed by local review boards during 1998 are listed below:

- Funds were donated to purchase a bicycle for a child in care.
- Funds were collected and donated to SC Seedlings to purchase pages in the Seedlings photolisting book. This book features children who are free for adoption and waiting for adoptive homes to be identified.
- Clothing donations were collected from local civic groups specifically targeted for children in foster care
- Local churches sponsored "Undy Sundays" where church members donated underclothing of all sizes and types to have on hand for children who enter foster care with only the clothes on their backs.
- Donations of toiletry items were collected and packed in small travel packs for children to have when they enter foster care, or when moving from home to home.
- Duffle bags and back packs were collected to have on hand for children coming into care.
- Donations were collected for the South Carolina Foster Parents "Suitcases for Foster Children" drive.
- Money for an annual fund for foster children was established in one county in order to provide the means necessary for foster children to attend camps, participate in special field trips, go to the prom, buy school pictures, etc.
- Christmas donations of all types were gathered and delivered by local review board members.
- Numerous drop-ins were given around the state by local review boards to say "thank you" to local Department of Social Services workers for the hard work they do for children on a daily basis.

There are many other examples of such community contributions by local review board members. These listed are just a few ways in which citizen reviewers contribute their time and talents for children in South Carolina.

"...we all have a part in each other's stories and therefore share in both the responsibility and the joy of seeing that all children have a chance; yours, mine, those we only see at a distance, and those we don't see at all because they live in the shadows." Ina Hughes

LOCAL REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS

As of December 31, 1998

REVIEW BOARD MEMBER INFORMATION

Board	Residence	County	Race	Sex	Occupation
<u>Board 1A</u>					
Eleanor Bilton	Holly Hill	Orangeburg	W	F	retired/public health
Valeria Staley	Orangeburg	Orangeburg	B	F	retired educator
Ethel Williams	Elloree	Orangeburg	B	F	retired educator
Linda Knott	St. Matthews	Calhoun	W	F	secretary
Vacant		Calhoun			
<u>Board 1B</u>					
Marsha Korpanty	Summerville	Dorchester	W	F	school psychologist
Alice Pinckney	St. George	Dorchester	B	F	retired /education
Linda Wright	Summerville	Dorchester	W	F	retired/human services
Ginger Sims	Orangeburg	Orangeburg	W	F	banking
Brenda Wallace	Orangeburg	Orangeburg	B	F	education
<u>Board 2A</u>					
Cynthia Dial	Williston	Barnwell	B	F	community volunteer
Charles Weldon	Barnwell	Barnwell	B	M	retired/military/clergy
Barbara Walker	Beech Island	Aiken	B	F	retired/social worker
Margie Blizzard	Perry	Aiken	W	F	retired/sales
Vacant		Aiken			
<u>Board 2B</u>					
Arlene Graves	Denmark	Bamberg	B	F	retired/education
Mary Ann Rogers	Aiken	Aiken	W	F	education
Stephen McElmurray	Aiken	Aiken	W	M	pharmacist
Cheryl McGee	Aiken	Aiken	W	F	real estate
Vacant		Bamberg			
<u>Board 3A</u>					
Rosa Conner	Kingstree	Williamsburg	B	F	retired
Laura McKnight	Kingstree	Williamsburg	B	F	retired
Carrie Sinkler-Parker	Alcolu	Clarendon	B	F	human services
Lois McInville	Manning	Clarendon	W	F	retired
Peggy Gardner	Manning	Clarendon	W	F	retired/education
<u>Board 3B</u>					
Eric Bultman	Sumter	Sumter	B	M	arts administration
Frances Hill	Sumter	Sumter	B	F	program coordinator
Dorothy Lyles	Sumter	Sumter	W	F	homemaker
Rose M. Newman	Sumter	Sumter	W	F	homemaker
Ruth Shuford	Bishopville	Lee	W	F	homemaker

Board	Residence	County	Race	Sex	Occupation
<u>Board 4A</u>					
Sue Brigman	Blenheim	Marlboro	W	F	retired/business
Vacant		Marlboro			
Herbert Washington	Bennettsville	Marlboro	B	M	retired/vocational education
Martha Alderman	Little Rock	Dillon	W	F	homemaker
Vacant		Dillon			
<u>Board 4B</u>					
Sarah Campbell	Chesterfield	Chesterfield	W	F	retired/human services
Tommy McCray	Pageland	Chesterfield	W	M	retired/community volunteer
Elizabeth Rivers	Chesterfield	Chesterfield	W	F	retired/school guidance
Lucy Brown	Hartsville	Darlington	W	F	human services
Wayne Sims	Hartsville	Darlington	W	M	management
<u>Board 5A</u>					
Brenda Grays	Irmo	Richland	B	F	banking
Henry Hopkins	Columbia	Richland	B	M	retired
John Kirby	Columbia	Richland	W	M	retired
Sandra Friedner	Columbia	Richland	W	F	human services
Mike Couick	Columbia	Richland	W	M	attorney
<u>Board 5B</u>					
Esther Kelly	Columbia	Richland	W	F	retired
Jan Hadwin	Columbia	Richland	W	F	retired
Jean Slider	Columbia	Richland	W	F	retired
Wilbur Tucker	Columbia	Richland	B	M	retired
Zephoria Tucker	Columbia	Richland	B	F	human services
<u>Board 5C</u>					
Susie Cureton	Columbia	Richland	B	F	education
Clara DuBard	Columbia	Richland	B	F	consultant/education
Mary Havens	Columbia	Richland	W	F	education
Elizabeth Smith	Columbia	Richland	W	F	adm/human services
Ted Moore	Columbia	Richland	W	M	retired
<u>Board 5D</u>					
Robert Weston	Columbia	Richland	B	M	retired
Wilhelmina Kennedy	Columbia	Richland	B	F	retired
Louise McFarland	Columbia	Richland	W	F	retired
Vacant		Richland			
Vacant		Richland			

Board	Residence	County	Race	Sex	Occupation
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Board 5E

Vacant Vacant

Kershaw Richland

Rengy Marshall	Camden	Kershaw	W	F	homemaker
Eugene Rollins	Liberty Hill	Kershaw	W	M	minister/therapist
James Murray	Columbia	Richland	B	M	retired

Board 6A

Vicki Hinson	Lancaster	Lancaster	W	F	nurse
Vacant		Lancaster			
Rebecca Waldrep	Chester	Chester	W	F	product manager
Elizabeth Smith	Chester	Chester	W	F	retired
Herman Young	Blair	Fairfield	B	M	law enforcement

Board 7A

Betty Groce	Spartanburg	Spartanburg	W	F	retired/education
Rosalind Brown	Spartanburg	Spartanburg	B	F	retired/education
Dorothy Lewis-Hughes	Spartanburg	Spartanburg	B	F	retired/education
Mary Lynn Melton	Spartanburg	Spartanburg	W	F	consultant
Delphine Thornton	Roebuck	Spartanburg	B	F	retired

Board 7B

Cris Foster	Roebuck	Spartanburg	W	F	retired banker
Mary Ann Riley	Inman	Spartanburg	W	F	retired/education
Judy Hamrick	Gaffney	Cherokee	W	F	homemaker
Micki Blalock	Gaffney	Cherokee	W	F	homemaker
Sandra Gore	Blacksburg	Cherokee	W	F	business

Board 8A

Eleanor Litts	Hodges	Greenwood	W	F	retired/farming
Dora Ann White	Greenwood	Greenwood	B	F	retired
Juanita Hozey	Abbeville	Abbeville	W	F	youth minister
Jim Freeman	Abbeville	Abbeville	W	M	minister
Christie Whitaker	Newberry	Newberry	W	F	business

Board 9A

Phyllis Tipton	Charleston	Charleston	W	F	sales
Gary Goss	Mt. Pleasant	Charleston	W	M	self-employed
Pearl Jenkins	Charleston	Charleston	B	F	homemaker
Jeannette Lee	Mt. Pleasant	Charleston	B	F	homemaker
Rebecca Gilliard	Charleston	Charleston	B	F	medical administration

Board	Residence	County	Race	Sex	Occupation
<u>Board 9B</u>					
William Godwin	Hanahan	Berkeley	W	M	retired
Christee Hunt	Moncks Corner	Berkeley	W	F	teacher assistant/LBSW
Rosetta Givens Mitchell	Goose Creek	Berkeley	B	F	college administrator
Archie Wigger	Ridgeville	Berkeley	W	M	supervisor
Winnie Wilson	Moncks Corner	Berkeley	W	F	retired/LBSW

Board 9C

Jackie Brewer	Charleston	Charleston	W	F	accountant
Jill Stevenson	Folly Beach	Charleston	W	F	homemaker
Melvin Roberts	Charleston	Charleston	W	M	re-developer
Charles Green	Charleston	Charleston	B	M	law enforcement
Robin Jenkins	N.Charleston	Charleston	W	F	self-employed

Board 9D

Barbara Acobe	Charleston	Charleston	B	F	public administration
John Henry	N. Charleston	Charleston	W	M	retired
Joan Mack	Charleston	Charleston	B	F	college administrator
Burnet Mendelsohn	Charleston	Charleston	W	M	self-employed
Vacant		Charleston			

Board 10A

Carolyn Davis	Walhalla	Oconee	W	F	homemaker
Betty Rollison	Seneca	Oconee	W	F	homemaker
George Sloan	Seneca	Oconee	B	M	mechanic/pastor
Deborah Thrift	Westminster	Oconee	W	F	homemaker
Barbara Waters	Westminster	Oconee	W	F	retired/public health

Board 10B

Linda Alewine-Atkinson	Iva	Anderson	W	F	homemaker
Angie Scott	Anderson	Anderson	B	F	human services
Linda Williams	Easley	Anderson	W	F	adoption administrator
Vacant		Anderson			
Vacant		Anderson			

Board 11A

Marion Atkins	Columbia	Lexington	W	F	adm/children's shelter
Reggie Cruse	Lexington	Lexington	W	M	pastor
Charlie Farmer	Red Bank	Lexington	W	M	self-employed
Beverly Ingram	Chapin	Lexington	W	F	social worker
Margie Mijares	Pelion	Lexington	W	F	foster parent

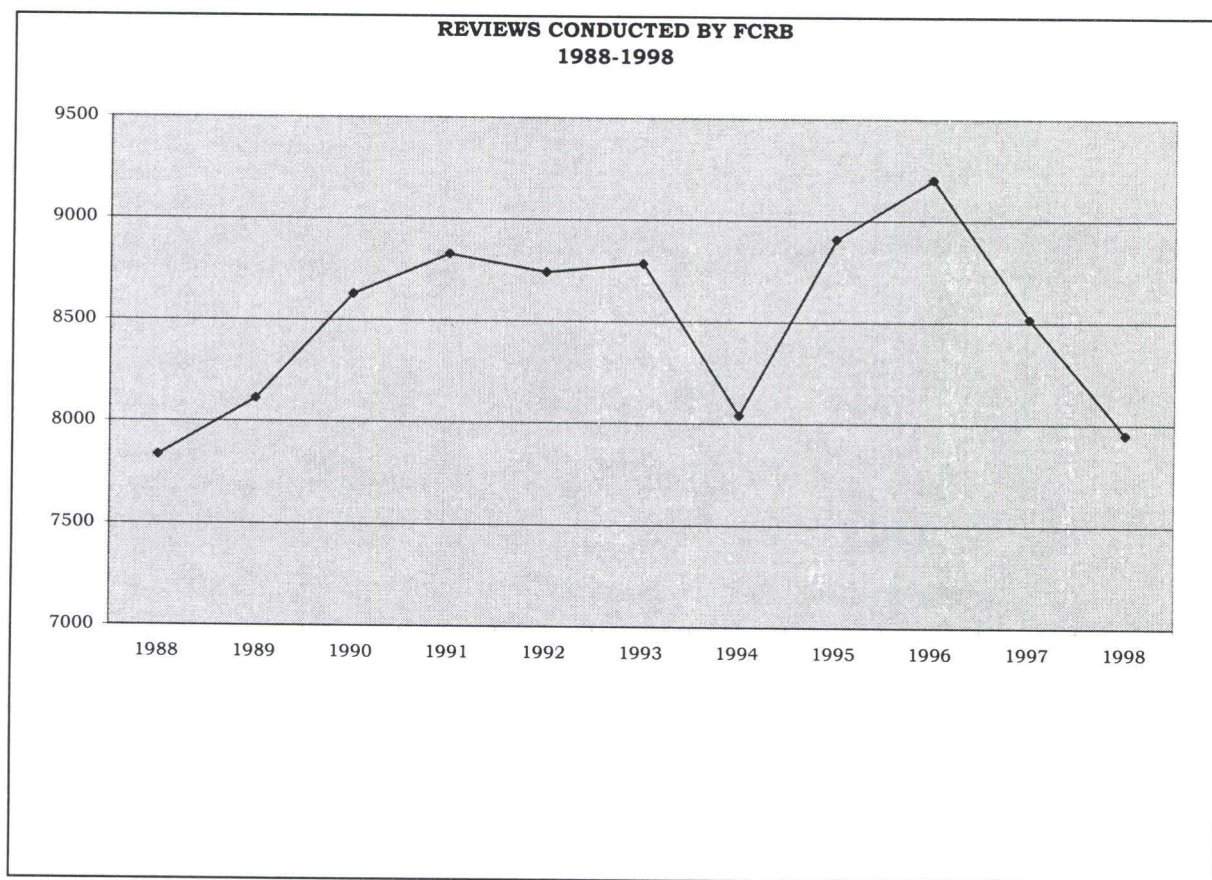
Board	Residence	County	Race	Sex	Occupation
<u>Board 11B</u>					
Mary E. Ouzts	Edgefield	Edgefield	W	F	retired
Adra Forrester	Edgefield	Edgefield	W	F	retired
Gail Nordyke	McCormick	McCormick	W	M	retired
John Prather	McCormick	McCormick	W	M	retired
Almastine Butler	Saluda	Saluda	B	F	secretary
<u>Board 12A</u>					
Betty Hester	Florence	Florence	W	F	community volunteer
Catherine Green	Effingham	Florence	B	F	retired
Timothea Lewis	Florence	Florence	W	F	clergy
Emma Sellers	Florence	Florence	B	F	administrative assistant
Careitha Jackson	Florence	Florence	B	F	human services
<u>Board 12B</u>					
Ezekial Washington	Florence	Florence	B	M	retired
Beatrice James	Florence	Florence	B	F	retired/education
Isabelle Bryant	Mullins	Marion	B	F	retired/education
Truman Tart	Nichols	Marion	B	M	minister
Linda Godfrey	Mullins	Marion	B	F	social worker
<u>Board 13A</u>					
Janie Dillon	Clemson	Pickens	W	F	retired
Scott Hart	Easley	Pickens	W	M	retired
Thomas Owens	Easley	Pickens	W	M	retired
Janet Reese	Central	Pickens	B	F	homemaker
Elizabeth Weaver	Easley	Pickens	W	F	certified public accountant
<u>Board 13B</u>					
Carol Christopher	Greenville	Greenville	W	F	adm/human services
Jane Daniel	Greer	Greenville	W	F	director/volunteer services
Fay Hart	Taylors	Greenville	W	F	mediator/counselor
Tommy Rice	Greenville	Greenville	B	M	adm/human services
Janice Turner	Travelers Rest	Greenville	B	F	human services program
<u>Board 13C</u>					
Roberta Anderson	Greenville	Greenville	W	F	education
Jane Bondurant	Greenville	Greenville	W	F	retired
Nancy Jones	Greenville	Greenville	W	F	nurse
Vernon McCurry	Greenville	Greenville	W	M	retired businessman
Vacant		Greenville			

Board	Residence	County	Race	Sex	Occupation
<u>Board 14A</u>					
Jeannette Ferguson	Allendale	Allendale	W	F	homemaker
Daisy Lawton	Varnville	Hampton	B	F	guidance counselor
Vacant		Hampton			
Joan Youmans	Walterboro	Colleton	B	F	minister
Kelly Ramsey	Walterboro	Colleton	W	F	real estate
<u>Board 14B</u>					
Emma Jones	Pineland	Jasper	B	F	elementary/administrator
Ollie McAlister	Ridgeland	Jasper	B	F	retired/human services
Thelma Miller	Beaufort	Beaufort	B	F	guidance counselor
Jessica Murphey	Hilton Head	Beaufort	W	F	sales
Bobsy Simes	Hilton Head	Beaufort	W	F	artist/oils
<u>Board 15A</u>					
David Drayton	Georgetown	Georgetown	B	M	retired
Janet Eisinger	Pawleys Island	Georgetown	W	F	retired
Pat Schooler	Georgetown	Georgetown	W	F	homemaker
Vacant		Georgetown			
Vacant		Georgetown			
<u>Board 15B</u>					
Edwin Breeze	Conway	Horry	W	M	musician
Roszena Soles	Nichols	Horry	B	F	beautician
Patrick Mayle	Myrtle Beach	Horry	W	M	therapist
Nita Sparks	Conway	Horry	W	F	retired
Mary Gerald	Nichols	Horry	W	F	education
<u>Board 15C</u>					
Laura Clemmons	Myrtle Beach	Horry	W	F	child development
Al Fanshaw	Conway	Horry	W	M	retired
Carol Landberg	Surfside Beach	Horry	W	F	college administrator
Shari May	Little River	Horry	W	F	homemaker
Bernice Whittington	Conway	Horry	W	F	retired
<u>Board 16A</u>					
Nadara Andrews	Clover	York	W	F	self-employed
Sally Bloomingdale	Rock Hill	York	W	F	homemaker
Neil Covington	Rock Hill	York	W	M	college professor
Dorothy Gist	Union	Union	B	F	retired/human services
Margaret Holloway	Union	Union	B	F	retired/education

STATISTICAL INFORMATION - REVIEWS CONDUCTED BY REVIEW BOARDS
JANUARY 1, 1998 - DECEMBER 31, 1998

The Review Board conducted a total of 7,948 reviews in 1998 on a total of 4,618 children in public foster care.⁹ This is a seven percent (7%) decrease over the number of reviews conducted by local boards during 1997.

TABLE I

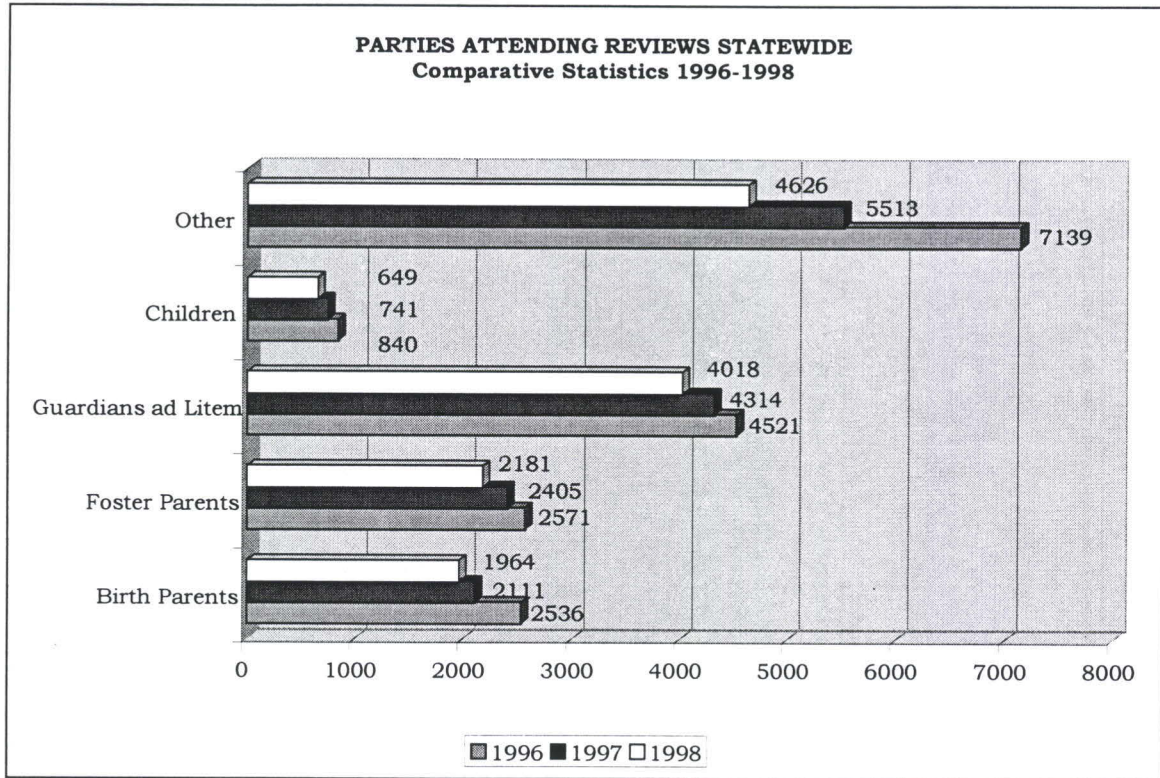


⁹ Effective January 1, 1994, children privately placed in private children's homes were no longer reviewed by the Foster Care Review Board. Statutory authority was granted to the Review Board in Proviso #6DD.39 of the Fiscal Year 93/94 budget to cease these reviews. The General Assembly believed it to be a more appropriate use of state dollars to focus reviews on the cases of children who are in the custody of the State rather than private cases.

PARTICIPATION BY INTERESTED PARTIES AT LOCAL REVIEWS

Table II compares the number of interested parties attending reviews in 1996, 1997, and 1998. During 1998, a total of 13,438 interested parties attended local review board meetings. This total reflects an eleven percent (11%) decrease over the number of interested parties attending reviews during 1997. The percentage of reviews with parties in attendance for 1998 was sixty-nine percent (69%). This reflects a three percent (3%) decrease in the overall percentage of parties attending reviews in 1998 when compared to the 1997 percentage of seventy-two percent (72%). All interested parties who attend reviews provide the local boards with important information used to make recommendations.

TABLE II



RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED BY LOCAL REVIEW BOARDS

Local review boards carefully consider input from all interested parties, as well as written materials prepared for the review, prior to making a recommendation on each child's case. After board members have heard from all parties present for the review, all parties are excused and the board meets privately to formulate the recommendation for the child. Board members are required by statute to consider the most appropriate permanent recommendation possible for each child. They also determine if all parties involved in the child's case are taking the steps necessary to achieve the plan in a timely manner. Local review boards and the Department of Social Services were in agreement as to the best permanent plan in eighty-one percent (81%) of the children's cases reviewed during 1998.

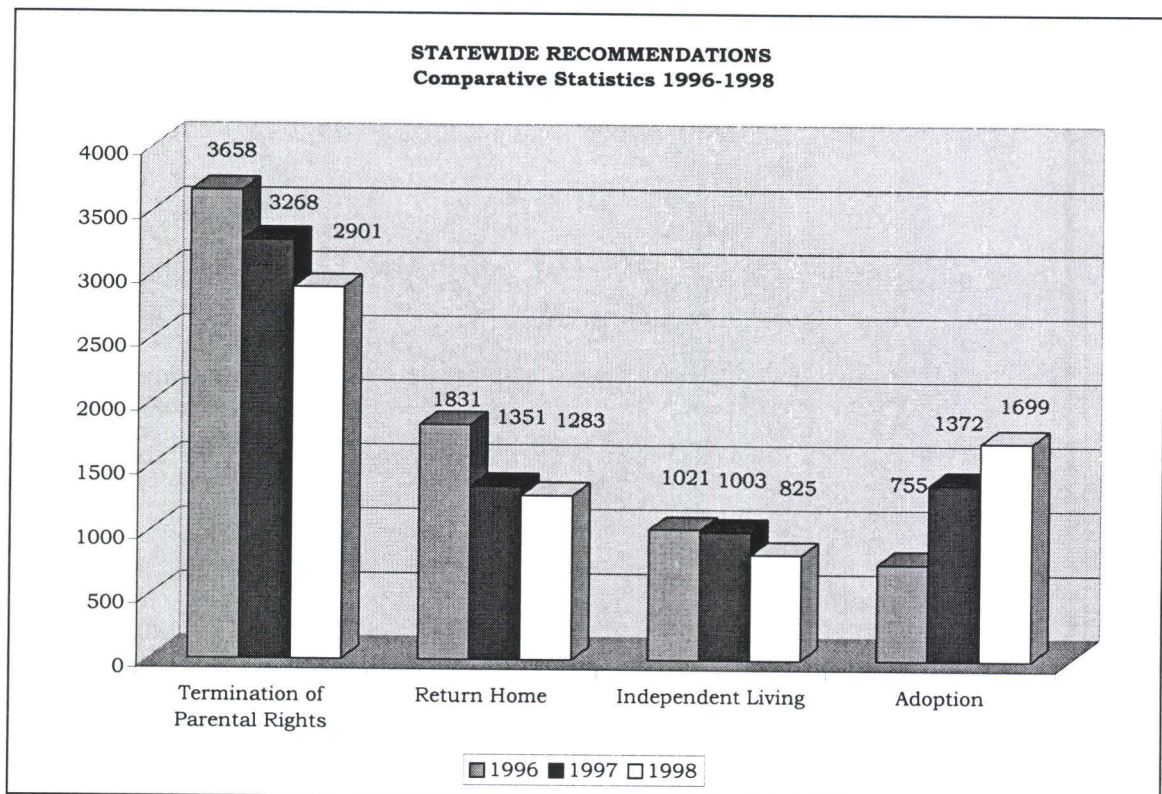
Review boards issue a written recommendation for a permanent placement on each child reviewed. Table III describes the frequency, type, and percentage for each of the eleven recommendations issued by local review boards on children reviewed during 1998.

TABLE III
STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS
January 1, 1998 - December 31, 1998

Recommendation	Frequency	% of Total Recommendations
Termination of Parental Rights	2901	37%
Adoption	1699	21%
Return to Parent	1283	16%
Permanent Foster Care	863	11%
Independent Living	825	10%
Case Continued	133	2%
Relative Placement	93	1%
No Review	84	1%
Permanent Group Home	40	1%
Residential Treatment	22	<1%
Other	5	<1%
TOTAL	7948	100%

Table IV compares the frequency of the four plans most recommended by local review boards during 1996, 1997, and 1998. Data in Table IV indicates that there has been a five percent (5%) increase in the percentage of recommendations issued by local review boards for adoption when compared to 1997 percentages. The overall percentage of recommendations for adoption issued by local review boards doubled when compared to 1996 percentages. This data identifies a large number of children in the foster care population who are free for adoption and waiting to have their placements in forever families finalized.

TABLE IV



AREAS OF CONCERN IDENTIFIED BY LOCAL REVIEW BOARDS

A major focus of the Division of Foster Care Review is to help systems work for children. Therefore, the identification and analysis of significant barriers or concerns which may prevent timely, permanent placement are essential. Areas of Concern are defined as violations of federal law, state law or public agency policy which have been determined by the Review Board to be significant barriers in the provision of permanency planning services to children in foster care. The Areas of Concern definitions are presented beginning on page 36 of this report.

Although the Department of Social Services holds custody and service delivery responsibility for the 4,618 children in public foster care reviewed by the boards in 1998, the Department of Social Services is not responsible for all of the barriers or deficiencies mentioned in this report. Service delivery to foster children involves the complex interaction of many systems, any one of which may be a contributing factor which prolongs a child's stay in foster care.

For purposes of data analysis, the nineteen Areas of Concern tracked by the Foster Care Review Board during 1998 are divided into two categories: Legal and Program. Definitions of these two categories are as follows:

- 1) Legal - Violations of federal statutory requirements related to Public Law 96-272; violations of state law in regard to timeliness of court hearings and adoption proceedings; and non-compliance with court orders.
- 2) Program - Violations of programmatic policies and procedures established by public agencies related to the delivery of child welfare services. Areas of Concern in this area deal with violations of public agency policy regarding service delivery to foster children and their families. These programmatic Areas of Concern reflect inadequacies in the funding and/or delivery of services to foster children.

Statewide totals for each Area of Concern and associated percentages are presented on page 39 of this report. Totals and percentages for each county and regional adoption office are presented beginning on page 41. County data includes concerns cited on cases that are case-managed by the regional Managed Treatment Service (MTS) division of the Department of Social Services.

AREA OF CONCERN DEFINITIONS

Effective July 1998

LEGAL

- 1. NO TIMELY PROBABLE CAUSE HEARING**
SC Code Sec. 20-7-610

The probable cause hearing was not **completed** within 72 hours of the child being taken into emergency protective custody or within 72 hours of emergency physical custody if legal custody was assumed by DSS.
- 2. NO TIMELY MERIT HEARING**
SC Code Sec. 20-7-610
SC Code Sec. 20-7-736

Merit hearing was not **completed** within 35 days as stipulated by law or has not been held at all.
- 3. NO TIMELY PERMANENCY PLANNING HEARING**
SC Code Sec. 20-7-766
PL 96-272 Sec. 471(a)(16) see 42 USCS Sec. 671(a)(16)
PL 96-272 Sec. 475(5)(C) see 42 USCS Sec. 675(5)(C)
**SC Code Sec. 20-7-763(E)*

Permanency planning hearing was not **completed** within time frames stipulated by state or federal requirements or has not been held at all.
- 4. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH COURT ORDER**

Agency is not in compliance with court order.
- 5. NO COURT ORDER AT REVIEW**
FCRB Regulation 24-15(P)
SC Family Court Rule 26(c)

A hearing was held at least 30 days prior to the Review Board meeting and copy of the court order was not available
- 6. NO FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT**
SC Code Sec. 20-7-767

DSS caseworker has not visited as required by statute.
- 7. THOROUGH ADOPTION ASSESSMENT NOT CONDUCTED**
SC Code Sec. 20-7-766(D)

DSS has not conducted and documented face-to-face interviews with the child, foster care providers, and other significant parties.
- 8. CHILD-SPECIFIC RECRUITMENT NOT CONDUCTED**
SC Code Sec. 20-7-766(D)
**SC Code Sec. 20-7-1895(F)*
**42 USCS 622(b)*

DSS has not conducted recruitment for an adoptive placement targeted to the individual child, including, but not limited to, use of the media, photo-listings and other resources.
- 9. ADOPTION COMPLAINT NOT FILED TIMELY**
SC Code Sec. 20-7-1730

Adoptive placement agreements have been signed and the adoption complaint was not filed within the time frame stipulated by law or has not been filed at all.

10. ADOPTION CONSUMMATION NOT TIMELY

SC Code Sec. 20-7-1760

11. NO TIMELY FOSTER CARE REVIEW

PL 96-272 Sec. 475(5) see 42 USCS Sec. 675(5)

FCRB Regulation 24-23B

12. OTHER STATUTORY VIOLATIONS (Examples)

SC Code Sec. 20-7-110

SC Code Sec. 20-7-124

SC Code Sec. 20-7-1570

SC Code Sec. 20-7-1980

SC Code Sec. 20-7-610

**SC Code Sec. 20-7-645*

**S.C. Code Sec. 20-7-768*

Adoption complaint has been filed and hearing not held within the time frame stipulated by law.

A review was not held because the caseworker (or designated agency personnel) was not present to make a presentation to the Review Board or was not prepared to present the case to the Review Board.

A GAL was not appointed as required by law or the GAL was not notified of court hearings pertaining to child.

Child(ren) placed across state lines without full compliance with requirements of Interstate Compact.

Reasonable efforts not made to notify noncustodial parent of removal proceedings.

*DSS did not provide foster parent, preadoptive parent, or relative caring for child notice of a hearing.

*Child has been in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months and DSS has not filed for termination of parental rights.

PROGRAM

13. NO CURRENT CASE PLAN

PL 96-272 Sec. 471(a)(16) see 42 USCS Sec. 671(a)(16)

PL 96-272 Sec. 475(1) see 42 USCS Sec. 675(1)

PL 96-272 Sec. 475(5)(A) see 42 USCS Sec. 675(5)(A)

SC Code Sec. 20-7-764

A case plan was not presented to the Review Board at the time of the review, or the time frames on the most recent case plan document have expired.

14. INCOMPLETE/INAPPROPRIATE CASE PLAN

PL 96-272 Sec. 471(a)(16) see 42 USCS Sec. 671(a)(16)

PL 96-272 Sec. 475(1) see 42 USCS Sec. 675(1)

PL 96-272 Sec. 475(5)(A)&(B) See USCS Sec. 475(5)(A)&(B)

SC Code Sec. 20-7-764

**42 USCS 675(1)*

Treatment objectives were not defined in the case plan; the case plan was not signed by the parent(s) and there was no indication as to why that was not possible; other parts of the Case Plan document were incomplete; inappropriate objectives were presented in the Case Plan.

*Case plan did not address the safety of the child.

15. NO CASE PLAN WITHIN 60 DAYS

DSS Directive Memo D88-210

PL 96-272 Sec. 471(a)(16) see 42 USCS Sec. 671(a)(16)

PL 96-272 Sec. 475(1) see 42 USCS Sec. 675(1)

PL 96-272 Sec. 475(5)(A) see 42 USCS Sec. 675(5)(B)

SC Code Sec. 20-7-764

A case plan was not initiated with the parent(s) within the first 60 days of placement as per agency policy and federal guidelines.

16. LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD PERMANENT PLAN

PL 96-272 Sec. 475(5)(B) see 42 USCS Sec. 675(5)(B)

Lack of progress made to achieve permanent plan within the past six months.

17. INTERESTED PARTIES NOT INVITED

FCRB Regulation 24-9

Review was continued because interested parties specified by Review Board regulations were not invited to the review.

18. NO THREE WEEK NOTICE TO PARTIES

FCRB Regulation 24-9

Interested parties invited to the review did not receive three weeks advance notice as required.

19. POLICY/PROCEDURE VIOLATION

Violations of DSS policies/procedures as outlined in agency policy manuals were documented during the case review.

STATEWIDE AREAS OF CONCERN
January 1, 1998 - December 31, 1998

NUMBER OF REVIEWS FOR TIME PERIOD: **7948**
% TOTAL REVIEWS WITH AREAS OF CONCERN: **64%**

AREA OF CONCERN	FREQUENCY OF AREA OF CONCERN	% OF STATE TOTAL AREAS OF CONCERN
<u>LEGAL</u>		
NO TIMELY PROBABLE CAUSE HEARING	96	1%
NO TIMELY MERIT HEARING	763	8%
NO TIMELY PERMANENCY PLANNING HEARING	278	13%
NON-COMPLIANCE COURT ORDER	202	2%
NO COURT ORDER AT REVIEW	517	5%
ADOPTION COMPLAINT NOT FILED TIMELY	75	1%
ADOPTION NOT CONSUMMATED TIMELY	4	<1%
OTHER STATUTORY VIOLATIONS	56	1%
NO TIMELY FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD	102	1%
NO FACE TO FACE CONTACT WITH CHILD	842	9%
NO THOROUGH ADOPTION ASSESSMENT	258	3%
NO CHILD SPECIFIC ADOPTION RECRUITMENT	114	1%
Subtotal	4307	45%
<u>PROGRAM</u>		
NO CURRENT CASE PLAN	102	1%
INCOMPLETE/INAPPROPRIATE CASE PLAN	871	9%
NO CASE PLAN WITHIN 60 DAYS	45	1%
NO PROGRESS ON PERMANENT PLAN	881	9%
AGENCY POLICY PROCEDURE VIOLATION	2822	29%
INTERESTED PARTIES NOT INVITED TO ATTEND	330	3%
NO THREE WEEK NOTICE TO PARTIES	169	2%
OTHER	58	1%
Subtotal	5278	55%
TOTALS:	9585	100.0

**AREAS OF CONCERN
COMPARATIVE STATISTICS 1997-1998**

COUNTY	%REVIEWS W/AOC 1997	%REVIEWS W/AOC 1998	# OF REVIEWS 1997	# OF REVIEWS 1998	COUNTY	%REVIEWS W/AOC 1997	%REVIEWS W/AOC 1998	# OF REVIEWS 1997	# OF REVIEWS 1998
ABBEVILLE	63%	65%	30	23	GREENWOOD	40%	72%	53	86
AIKEN	77%	55%	358	282	HAMPTON	52%	58%	31	33
ALLENDALE	62%	53%	37	36	HORRY	34%	47%	454	270
ANDERSON	49%	74%	369	332	JASPER	82%	50%	11	4
BAMBERG	5%	7%	40	42	KERSHAW	41%	42%	66	65
BARNWELL	31%	25%	55	44	LANCASTER	22%	41%	100	75
BEAUFORT	69%	80%	140	138	LAURENS	73%	97%	55	70
BERKELEY	65%	85%	247	239	LEE	15%	0%	47	39
CALHOUN	37%	61%	38	36	LEXINGTON	71%	72%	181	188
CHARLESTON	66%	84%	839	585	MARION	63%	39%	109	88
CHEROKEE	56%	54%	57	52	MARLBORO	26%	24%	55	46
CHESTER	47%	56%	88	79	MCCORMICK	58%	71%	19	14
CHESTERFIELD	49%	60%	92	77	NEWBERRY	94%	89%	85	72
CLARENDON	47%	60%	74	78	OCONEE	89%	78%	151	166
COLLETON	67%	69%	106	105	ORANGEBURG	38%	41%	191	126
DARLINGTON	58%	52%	71	63	PICKENS	49%	70%	87	92
DILLON	33%	50%	69	44	RICHLAND	68%	78%	1096	862
DORCHESTER	27%	86%	110	90	SALUDA	29%	23%	51	35
EDGEFIELD	23%	37%	60	52	SPARTANBURG	51%	59%	417	413
FAIRFIELD	29%	34%	58	44	SUMTER	57%	53%	266	190
FLORENCE	41%	47%	298	178	UNION	39%	29%	13	7
GEORGETOWN	54%	59%	61	51	WILLIAMSBURG	27%	45%	34	38
GREENVILLE	68%	68%	512	507	YORK	34%	49%	254	189

REGIONAL ADOPTION (Comparative data by Regional DSS configuration not available for 1997)

Region I	36%	80	Region V	62%	110
Region II	38%	170	Region VI	70%	394
Region III	57%	195	Region VII	79%	339
Region IV	35%	314			

AREAS OF CONCERN BY PARTY HOLDING LEGAL CUSTODY
JANUARY 1, 1998 - DECEMBER 31, 1998

	Region I	Region II	Region III	Region IV	Region V	Region VI	Region VII	Abbeville	Aiken	Allendale	Anderson	Subtotal
Legal												
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	4	9
No Timely Merit Hearing	0	0	0	11	1	6	0	2	18	6	44	88
No Timely Permanency Planning Hearing	2	17	17	21	26	112	64	5	21	1	70	356
Non-Compliance w/Court Order	0	0	3	12	0	2	7	1	4	2	9	40
No Court Order at Review	1	4	4	6	4	32	41	0	9	1	9	111
Adopt. Complaint Not Filed	0	4	4	14	10	11	25	0	0	0	0	68
Adopt. Not Consummated Timely	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	5
No Timely Foster Care Review Board	2	1	10	0	0	10	2	0	11	0	2	38
No Face to Face Contact with Child	4	28	48	19	21	73	79	0	17	1	39	329
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	8	4	12	30
No Child Specific Adoption Recruitment	0	1	3	0	0	7	11	0	5	0	1	28
Other Statutory Violations	0	1	0	0	0	8	6	0	0	0	0	15
Subtotal	9	56	93	86	62	263	236	10	96	16	190	1117
Program												
No Current Case Plan	0	0	6	0	1	2	6	1	12	0	2	30
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	3	1	0	3	0	15	0	6	12	8	57	105
No Case Plan w/in 60 Days	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Lack of Progress on Permanent Plan	16	10	31	21	6	81	104	1	41	1	38	350
Agency Policy/Proc. Violation	5	34	42	23	36	111	141	10	131	7	118	658
Interested Parties Not Invited To Attend	0	1	6	5	8	9	24	1	16	0	8	78
No Three Week Notice to Parties	4	0	0	0	5	4	45	0	0	0	1	59
Other	0	0	1	0	2	0	8	0	9	0	0	20
Subtotal	28	46	86	52	58	224	328	19	221	16	224	1302
Totals:												
Areas of Concern	37	102	179	138	120	487	564	29	317	32	414	2419
Number of Children*	58	115	138	213	80	247	207	15	178	18	200	1469
Reviews of Children**	80	170	195	314	110	394	339	23	282	36	332	2275
Reviews of Children w/ Areas of Concern	29	64	111	109	68	277	269	15	156	19	246	1363
% Reviews w/Areas of Concern	37%	38%	57%	35%	62%	70%	79%	65%	55%	53%	74%	

Data presented for Regions I-VII represents Regional Adoption information

* Indicates an unduplicated count of the number of children reviewed in each county/area during the time period.

** Indicates the total number of reviews conducted for the time period; some children receive more than one review during the calendar year.

AREAS OF CONCERN BY PARTY HOLDING LEGAL CUSTODY
JANUARY 1, 1998 - DECEMBER 31, 1998

	Bamberg	Barnwell	Beaufort	Berkeley	Calhoun	Charleston	Cherokee	Chester	Chesterfield	Clarendon	Colleton	Subtotal
Legal												
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	0	0	2	16	0	37	0	0	0	4	2	61
No Timely Merit Hearing	0	0	25	44	6	119	13	12	10	7	17	253
No Timely Permanency Planning Hearing	0	1	8	56	4	213	2	11	11	19	19	344
Non-Compliance w/Court Order	0	1	9	6	0	19	0	1	3	5	10	54
No Court Order at Review	0	0	6	10	4	58	3	9	11	4	2	107
Adopt. Complaint Not Filed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Adopt. Not Consummated Timely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Timely Foster Care Review Board	0	1	1	12	0	23	0	0	0	0	1	38
No Face to Face Contact with Child	0	0	12	34	2	31	3	1	13	7	6	109
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	0	0	15	14	0	30	2	1	6	6	5	79
No Child Specific Adoption Recruitment	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Other Statutory Violations	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	6
Subtotal	0	3	78	196	16	534	24	35	54	52	65	1057
Program												
No Current Case Plan	0	1	2	4	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	9
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	0	2	29	94	5	99	1	4	2	1	9	246
No Case Plan w/in 60 Days	0	0	2	4	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	16
Lack of Progress on Permanent Plan	0	3	2	15	2	34	0	9	2	2	6	75
Agency Policy/Proc. Violation	3	11	80	172	4	320	8	19	20	11	39	684
Interested Parties Not Invited To Attend	0	0	15	8	0	26	0	2	1	3	8	63
No Three Week Notice to Parties	1	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	6
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	4	17	131	297	11	493	9	35	27	17	62	1099
Totals:												
Areas of Concern	4	20	209	493	27	1027	33	70	81	69	127	2156
Number of Children*	27	29	82	147	19	360	36	53	50	49	57	882
Reviews of Children**	40	44	138	239	36	585	52	79	77	78	105	1433
Reviews of Children w/ Areas of Concern	2	11	75	204	22	493	28	44	46	47	72	1042
% Reviews w/Areas of Concern	5%	25%	80%	85%	61%	84%	54%	56%	60%	60%	69%	

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AREAS OF CONCERN BY PARTY HOLDING LEGAL CUSTODY
JANUARY 1, 1998 - DECEMBER 31, 1998

	Darlington	Dillon	Dorchester	Edgefield	Fairfield	Florence	Georgetown	Greenville	Greenwood	Hampton	Horry	Subtotal
Legal												
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	5	1	0	0	11
No Timely Merit Hearing	5	3	9	3	0	22	3	31	27	4	21	128
No Timely Permanency Planning Hearing	4	1	22	1	4	21	13	46	5	1	22	140
Non-Compliance w/Court Order	0	3	1	0	0	20	0	2	0	0	3	29
No Court Order at Review	3	0	34	0	0	1	10	13	7	12	2	82
Adopt. Complaint Not Filed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adopt. Not Consummated Timely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Timely Foster Care Review Board	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	8
No Face to Face Contact with Child	11	6	8	2	1	15	0	45	5	0	23	116
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	3	1	12	0	2	2	1	32	3	0	4	60
No Child Specific Adoption Recruitment	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	10	0	0	0	11
Other Statutory Violations	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	6
Subtotal	26	14	95	6	8	82	28	190	48	17	77	591
Program												
No Current Case Plan	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	24	0	0	3	30
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	6	4	28	0	4	6	1	70	14	7	10	150
No Case Plan w/in 60 Days	0	3	2	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	11
Lack of Progress on Permanent Plan	5	0	7	4	1	0	1	91	7	0	7	123
Agency Policy/Proc. Violation	12	16	77	9	8	14	13	299	31	29	81	589
Interested Parties Not Invited To Attend	2	2	10	1	0	1	3	25	1	0	4	49
No Three Week Notice to Parties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	8	18
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Subtotal	27	25	124	14	14	22	21	513	62	36	113	971
Totals:												
Areas of Concern	53	39	219	20	22	104	49	703	110	53	190	1562
Number of Children*	43	30	59	34	26	120	34	312	55	18	168	899
Reviews of Children**	63	44	90	52	44	178	51	507	86	33	270	1418
Reviews of Children w/ Areas of Concern	33	22	77	19	15	83	30	346	62	19	127	833
% Reviews w/Areas of Concern	52%	50%	86%	37%	34%	47%	59%	68%	72%	58%	47%	

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AREAS OF CONCERN BY PARTY HOLDING LEGAL CUSTODY
JANUARY 1, 1998 - DECEMBER 31, 1998

	Jasper	Kershaw	Lancaster	Laurens	Lee	Lexington	Marion	Marlboro	McCormick	Newberry	Oconee	Subtotal
Legal												
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	7
No Timely Merit Hearing	0	3	10	11	0	30	3	2	0	5	9	73
No Timely Permanency Planning Hearing	0	2	2	15	0	53	11	3	2	27	52	167
Non-Compliance w/Court Order	0	5	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	1	4	16
No Court Order at Review	0	6	1	6	0	10	1	1	0	14	12	51
Adopt. Complaint Not Filed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Adopt. Not Consummated Timely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Timely Foster Care Review Board	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	5
No Face to Face Contact with Child	0	5	2	6	0	10	9	1	0	4	36	73
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	0	3	0	6	0	4	0	0	1	6	5	25
No Child Specific Adoption Recruitment	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	7
Other Statutory Violations	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	6
Subtotal	0	24	18	47	0	116	28	8	4	63	123	431

Program												
No Current Case Plan	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	1	5	1	37	0	7	0	0	2	24	43	120
No Case Plan w/in 60 Days	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Lack of Progress on Permanent Plan	0	2	6	16	0	15	1	0	2	32	16	90
Agency Policy/Proc. Violation	1	12	10	35	0	69	13	4	7	70	36	257
Interested Parties Not Invited To Attend	0	0	1	9	0	13	2	0	1	1	7	34
No Three Week Notice to Parties	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	13
Other	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	7
Subtotal	2	19	18	108	0	109	16	4	13	135	102	526

Totals:												
Areas of Concern	2	43	36	155	0	225	44	12	17	198	225	957
Number of Children*	2	40	48	43	23	108	52	33	8	39	92	488
Reviews of Children**	4	65	75	70	39	188	89	46	14	72	166	828
Reviews of Children w/ Areas of Concern	2	27	31	68	0	136	34	11	10	64	129	512
% Reviews w/Areas of Concern	50%	42%	41%	97%	0%	72%	39%	24%	71%	89%	78%	

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AREAS OF CONCERN BY PARTY HOLDING LEGAL CUSTODY
JANUARY 1, 1998 - DECEMBER 31, 1998

	Orangeburg	Pickens	Richland	Saluda	Spartanburg	Sumter	Union	Williamsburg	York	Subtotal	GRAND TOTAL
Legal											
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	1	8	96
No Timely Merit Hearing	11	16	94	3	57	8	1	5	26	221	763
No Timely Permanency Planning Hearing	14	18	147	0	32	46	1	4	9	271	1278
Non-Compliance w/Court Order	0	0	45	0	4	9	0	1	4	63	202
No Court Order at Review	2	0	129	1	27	0	0	1	6	166	517
Adopt. Complaint Not Filed	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	75
Adopt. Not Consummated Timely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
No Timely Foster Care Review Board	0	1	5	0	3	2	0	4	0	15	102
No Face to Face Contact with Child	4	26	131	1	22	13	0	5	13	215	842
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	8	2	15	0	14	19	0	2	4	64	258
No Child Specific Adoption Recruitment	0	0	61	0	1	1	0	0	0	63	114
Other Statutory Violations	0	1	5	0	13	1	0	0	3	23	56
Subtotal	39	64	639	5	174	100	2	22	66	1111	4307
Program											
No Current Case Plan	0	2	23	2	3	0	0	0	0	30	102
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	8	19	151	0	60	6	1	1	4	242	871
No Case Plan w/in 60 Days	1	0	9	0	3	1	0	0	0	13	45
Lack of Progress on Permanent Plan	5	3	192	0	23	10	0	0	10	238	881
Agency Policy/Proc. Violation	15	19	407	2	130	14	0	4	40	616	2822
Interested Parties Not Invited To Attend	6	1	82	0	4	8	0	2	3	100	330
No Three Week Notice to Parties	1	5	61	0	5	0	0	0	0	71	169
Other	0	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	58
Subtotal	36	49	955	4	228	39	1	7	57	1340	5278
Totals:											
Areas of Concern	75	113	1594	9	402	139	3	29	123	2451	9585
Number of Children*	81	56	498	19	249	119	5	38	122	1106	4618
Reviews of Children**	126	92	862	35	413	190	7	17	189	1805	7948
Reviews of Children w/ Areas of Concern	52	64	675	8	244	101	2	17	93	1204	5044
% Reviews w/Areas of Concern	41%	70%	78%	23%	59%	53%	29%	45%	49%		64%

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** Indicates the total number of reviews conducted for the time period; some children receive more than one review during the calendar year.

ADVOCACY - CASE REFERRAL PROCESS

Review board coordinators may initiate personal follow-up on cases in their assigned caseloads as needed. Data for 1998 indicates that 508 children received individual attention from coordinators on specific issues following reviews. In addition to the individual follow-up done by review board coordinators, the Division of Foster Care Review operates a three-tiered referral process to facilitate additional advocacy efforts on behalf of children reviewed by local review boards. The ability of local review boards to advocate individually on behalf of children in foster care in South Carolina is vital to the overall effectiveness of the review system.

Legal Referrals

The Review Board legal staff includes the General Counsel for the Division and one staff attorney. These staff members represent and advise the Review Board on legal matters. Any legal action recommended by the local review board must be initiated by the State Review Board Office and is subject to approved policies and procedures. Local review boards refer any children's cases they feel necessary to the State Office staff for assessment. Through participation in Family Court hearings and individual legal follow-up on cases reviewed, the Review Board is able not only to educate, but also to advocate with judges, attorneys, and other individuals who may impact the child's case. Attorneys for the Division are active with various groups who work to draft legislation on children's issues and function as legal counsel to all local review boards and the State Board.

Administrative Referrals

The Division of Foster Care Review seeks to resolve issues through administrative channels if at all possible prior to seeking Family Court intervention. The two Project Administrator positions are used to facilitate a large part of the complex follow-up necessary on individual cases. Letters and telephone calls to senior levels, case staffings and other administrative functions are handled by these staff members in an effort to resolve issues of concern to local review boards.

Therapeutic/Medicaid Referrals

The Division of Foster Care Review operates a quality assurance review system for emotionally disturbed Medicaid eligible children who reside in residential treatment placements. The program was initiated pursuant to a contract with the Department of Health and Human Services and has been operational since

April 1992. Local review boards who have concerns about the quality of treatment or the appropriateness of a therapeutic placement may make a referral to the Medicaid Review Specialist. The Medicaid Review Specialist may arrange a separate Medicaid staffing with appropriate parties, or conduct additional inquiries relative to the case.

During 1998, review board staff initiated post-review referrals and advocacy efforts a total of 1,858 times on children reviewed by local boards. Some children reviewed had a variety of referrals made on their behalf. This data reflects a thirty-seven percent (37%) increase in the number of referrals initiated by review board staff when compared to 1997 numbers. Table V describes the number and type of administrative referrals handled by review board staff during 1998.

TABLE V
REVIEW BOARD REFERRALS BY TYPE
January 1, 1998 - December 31, 1998

TYPE OF REFERRAL	FREQUENCY
RBC Individual Follow-up	786
Legal Staff	828
Administrative	114
Therapeutic/Medicaid	127
TOTAL	1855

DEMOGRAPHIC AND COMPARATIVE DATA
JANUARY 1, 1998 - DECEMBER 31, 1998

Who are the children reviewed by the Foster Care Review Board?

During 1998, 891 children entered the Review Board data system and were reviewed for the first time by local boards; 1,410 were closed out of the Review Board data system; and 4,618 children remained active in the Review Board data system. Statistics in the following tables provide descriptive information on children reviewed.¹⁰

Statistical Comparison by Age

Tables A, B, and C describe the number of children in select age groups who entered the Review Board data system, the number leaving the Review Board data system, and the number of children who remained active in the Review Board data system during 1998. This data is presented in comparison to data in these same categories for 1996 and 1997.

Table A shows that forty-six percent (46%) of the children entering the Review Board data system during 1998 were less than six years of age. However, Table C shows that children in the Review Board data system under the age of six represented only thirty percent (30%) of the children who were closed out of the Review Board system.

Review Board data indicates that thirty-eight percent (38%) of the children closed out of the Review Board system spent longer than twenty-four months in foster care. Children older than sixteen were closed out of the Review Board system in the largest numbers, indicating that children may be staying in foster care until they are emancipated by the court, or reach the age of 18, rather than leaving the system due to placement in permanent homes.

¹⁰ The Division of Foster Care Review implemented an in-house computer information system in 1987. Each year changes and revisions are made, as necessary, in data collection methods in order to enhance the system and to provide better utilization of data. Questions related to data comparison should be referred to the Governor's Office, Division of Foster Care Review.

TABLE A

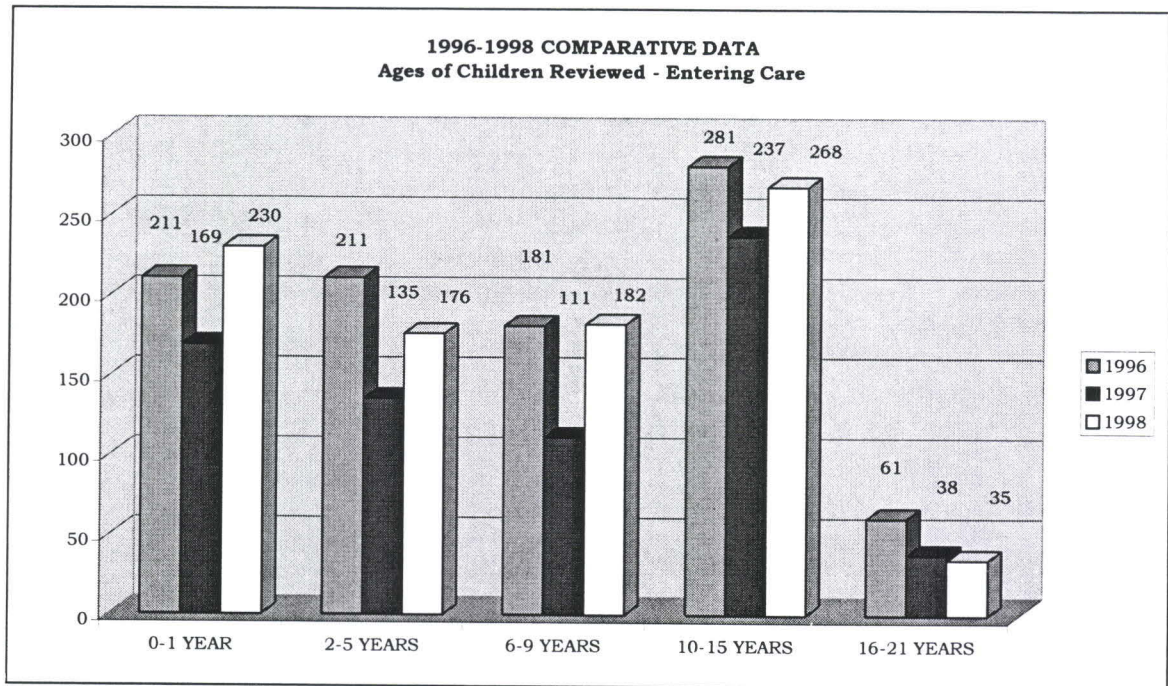


TABLE B

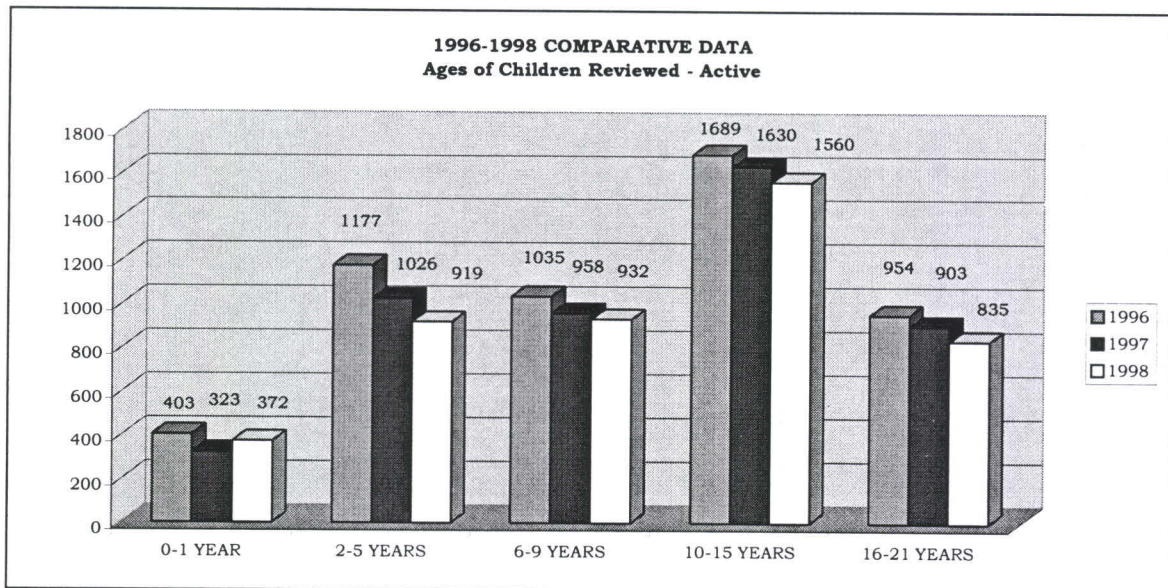
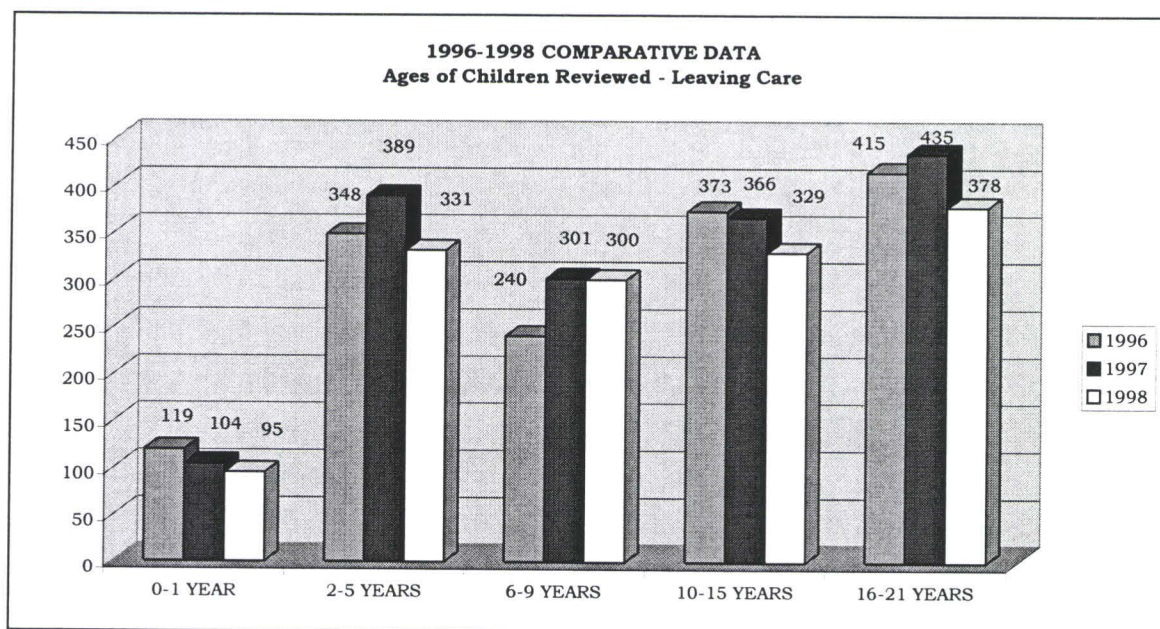


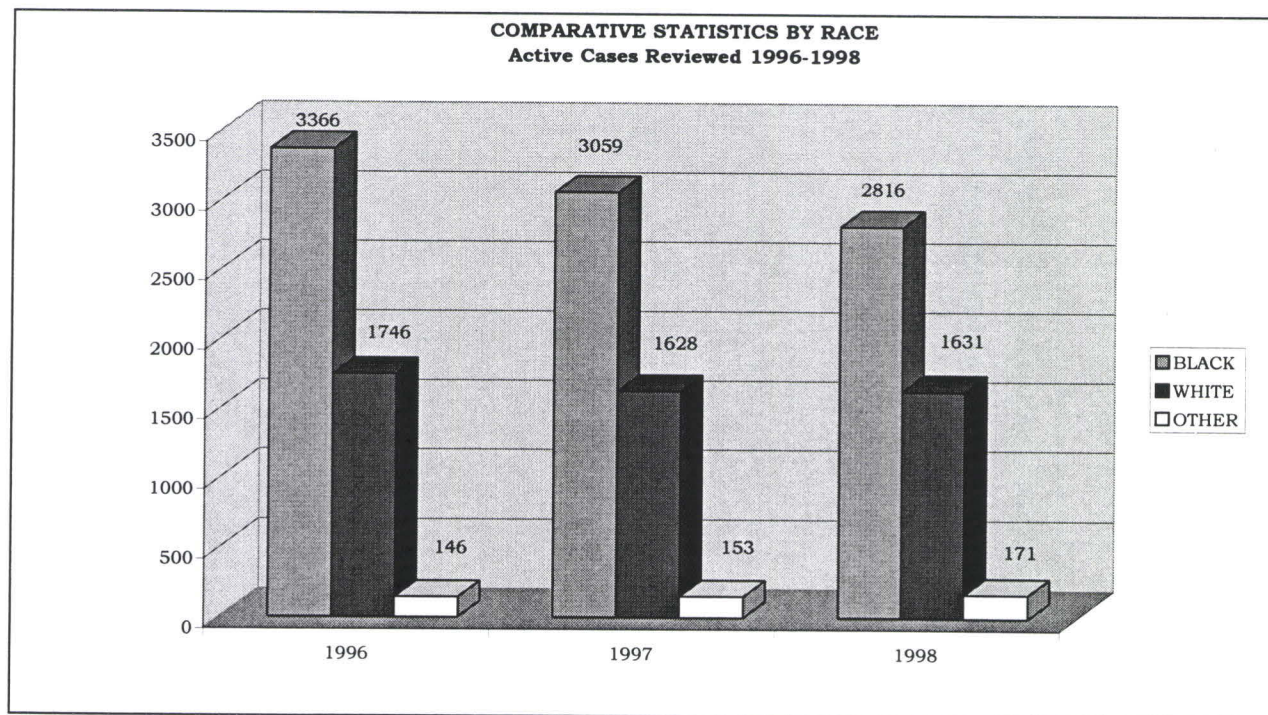
TABLE C



Statistical Comparison by Race

Table D depicts the race of children who were reviewed and remained active during 1996, 1997, and 1998. Data for 1998 indicates that sixty percent (60%) of the children active in the foster care population are black, thirty-five percent (35%) are white and four percent (4%) are of other races or biracial.

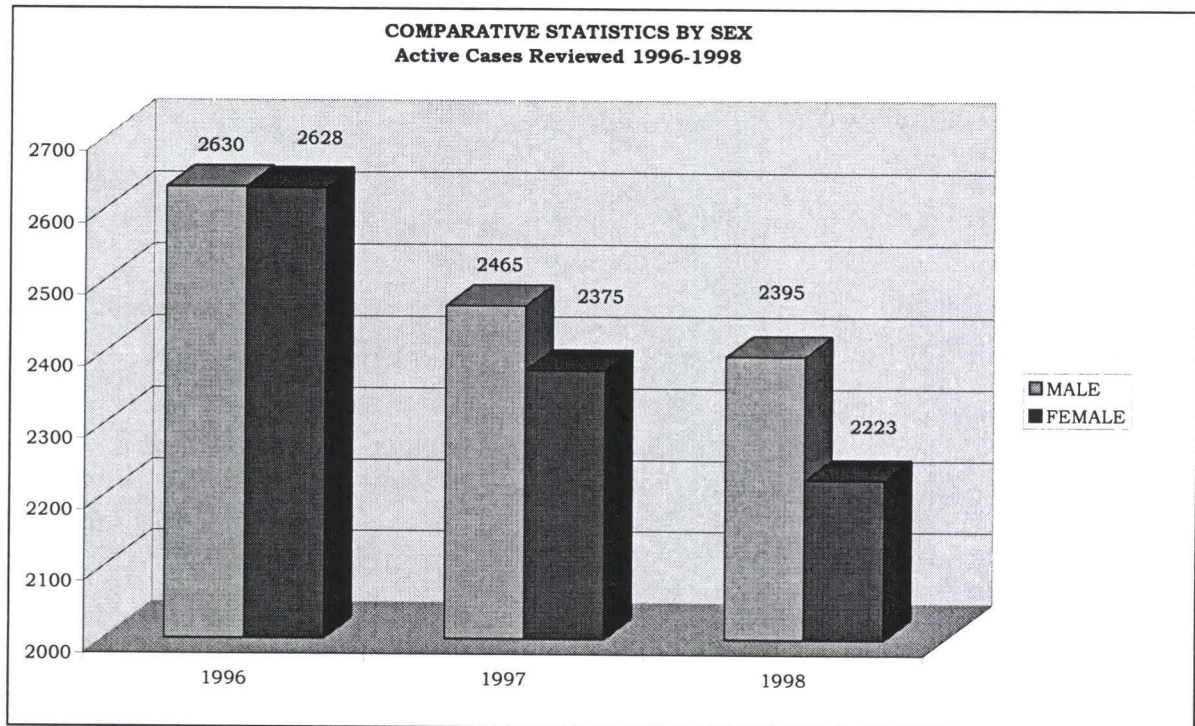
TABLE D



Statistical Comparison by Sex

Table E depicts the sex of children who were reviewed and remained active during 1996, 1997, and 1998. As in previous years, the percentage of males and females active in the foster care population is almost equal. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the children who were reviewed and remained active in the system were male and forty-eight percent (48%) were female.

TABLE E



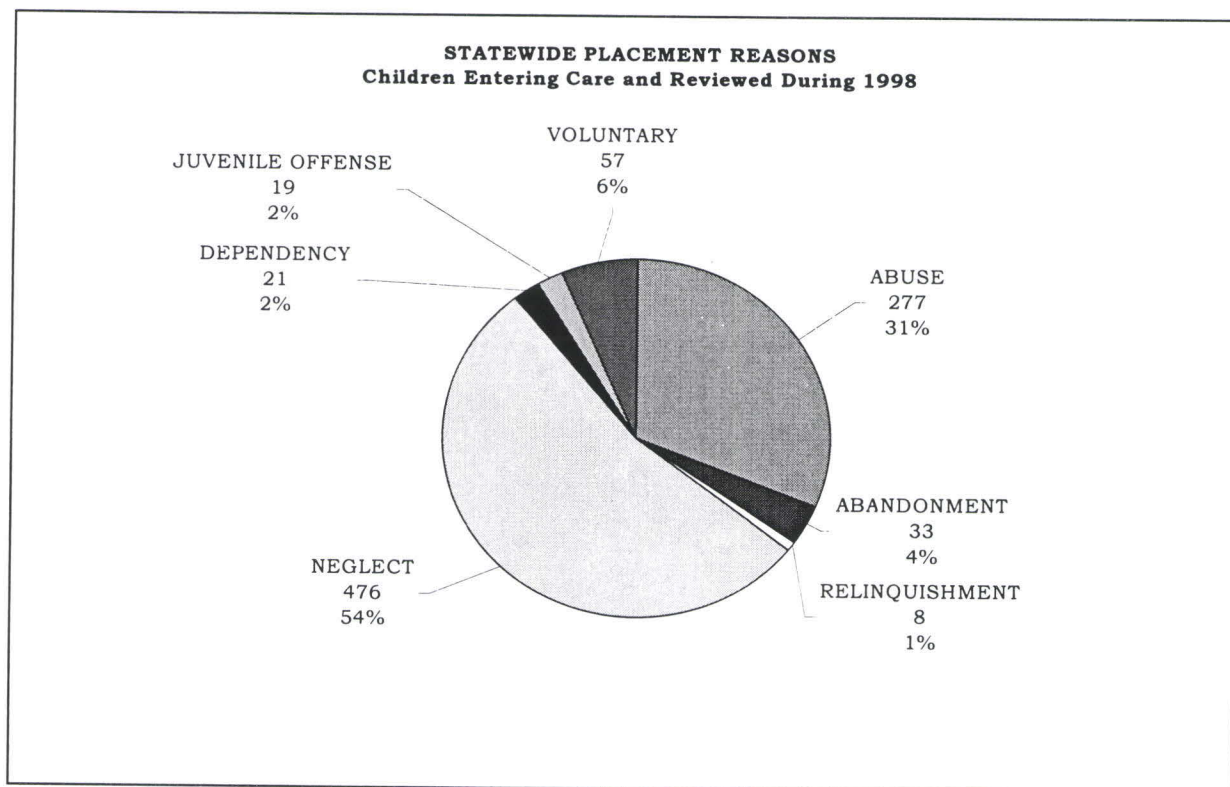
Why are children placed in foster care in South Carolina?

The Foster Care Review Board is legally mandated to review all children who have been in public foster care for a period of more than four consecutive months. Children placed in public foster care become wards of the state through a Family Court action with legal custody being held by the Department of Social Services.

During 1998, children reviewed in South Carolina entered foster care in one of the four following ways: 1) Ninety-one percent (91%) were placed involuntarily through the Family Court as a result of neglect, abuse, abandonment or dependency; 2) six percent (6%) were voluntarily placed by their custodial parents; 3) two percent (2%) entered as a result of a juvenile offense; and 4) one percent (1%) were voluntarily relinquished for the purpose of adoption.

Table F presents statewide data on the percentage for each type of placement. The percentage of children described in Table F combines the categories of physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.

TABLE F



The individual categories for each type of abuse are designated with associated percentages in Table G. Statistical data generated by the Review Board annually continues to indicate that neglect, at fifty-three percent (53%), continues to be the most frequent reason for placement of children in foster care in South Carolina.

TABLE G
STATEWIDE PLACEMENT REASONS FOR
CHILDREN ENTERING CARE AND REVIEWED
January 1, 1998 - December 31, 1998 *

PLACEMENT REASON	FREQUENCY	% OF TOTAL PLACEMENT REASONS
Neglect	476	53%
Abuse/Physical	137	15%
Voluntary	57	6%
Threat of Physical Abuse	79	9%
Abuse/Sexual	34	4%
Abandonment	33	4%
Threat of Sexual Abuse	26	3%
Dependency	21	2%
Juvenile Offense	19	1%
Relinquishment	8	1%
Abuse/Emotional	1	<1%
TOTAL	891	100%

* Reflects only children reviewed by the Review Board for the first time during 1998.

How many children in the foster care system are affected by teen pregnancy?

Teen pregnancy is an on-going concern for the state, and careful attention must be paid to the impact that teen pregnancy has on the foster care population in South Carolina. Review Board data for 1998 indicates that sixty-six (66) children had mothers who were less than eighteen years of age. In most cases, the mother of the child was also in foster care. While this number was not a significant percentage of the active foster care population during 1998, the impact on both the young mothers, and the children born to them, can be far reaching.

1998 Update Regarding South Carolina Adolescent Pregnancy ¹¹

Data from the Department of Health and Environment Control regarding live births in South Carolina during 1997 shows:

- 8,540 births were to mothers ages 10-19.
- 203 births were to mothers ages 10-14.
- 3,238 births were to mothers ages 15-17.
- 5,099 births were to mothers ages 18-19.
- South Carolina ranks 10th highest in teen birth rates in the nation (Kids Count, 1998).
- 8,540 babies were born to South Carolina teen mothers in 1997, but only 3,380 of the fathers were identified.
- In 1997, only 1,158 of the fathers identified were teen-age boys.
- 5,160 teen mothers will raise their children without benefit of child support from the father of the child.

Data on children in foster care with teenage mothers will continue to be tracked by the Review Board in the coming years to follow the impact of this population and efforts made to address abuse issues.

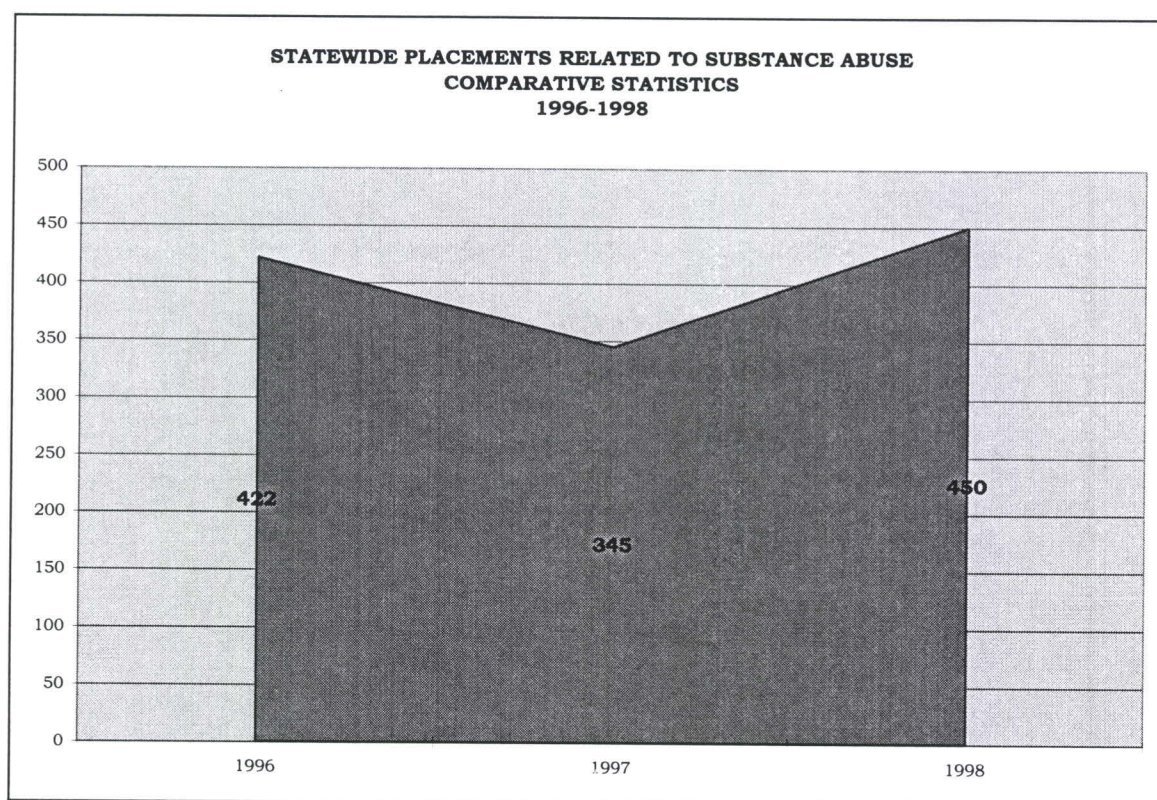
¹¹

How many children in the foster care system are affected by substance abuse?

The number of substance abuse related placements of children in the foster care system has been tracked statistically by the Review Board since 1990. Substance abuse continues to be a significant factor in the reasons children were placed in foster care in 1998. Review Board data for 1998 indicates that substance abuse was a contributing factor in the placements for 450 (51%) of the 891 children who entered foster care and were reviewed for the first time during 1998.

Table H reflects the number of children affected by substance abuse and reviewed by the Review Board from 1996 to 1998.

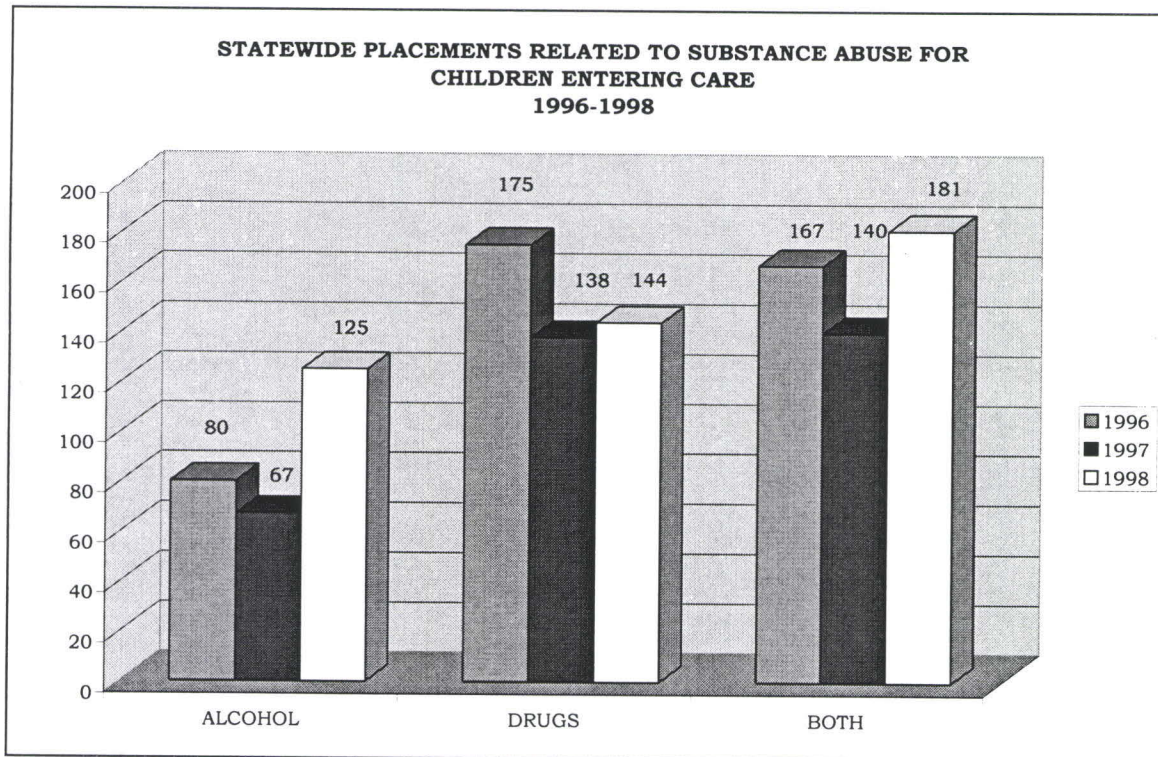
TABLE H



Data presented in Table I describes the children entering foster care during 1998 whose placements were affected by substance abuse. Table I provides a breakdown on the type of substance abuse involved in the placement. The Review Board divides these into three categories: alcohol, drugs or both. Data for 1998 indicates a thirty percent (30%) increase in the number of children entering the Review Board system whose placement in foster care was related to substance abuse.

The powerful impact of drugs and alcohol on the children of this country reached epidemic proportions during the 1980's and has continued to grow since that time. This crisis has had a devastating effect on families, and particularly on the children who have been the silent victims of prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol. In the United States, it is estimated that between 550,000 and 750,000 of the children born each year have been exposed to drugs or alcohol prior to birth. In addition to the biological risk that prenatal alcohol or drug exposure poses to these children, they are at increased risk of child abuse and neglect by parents whose need for drugs takes priority over the care of their infants and children.¹²

TABLE I



¹²

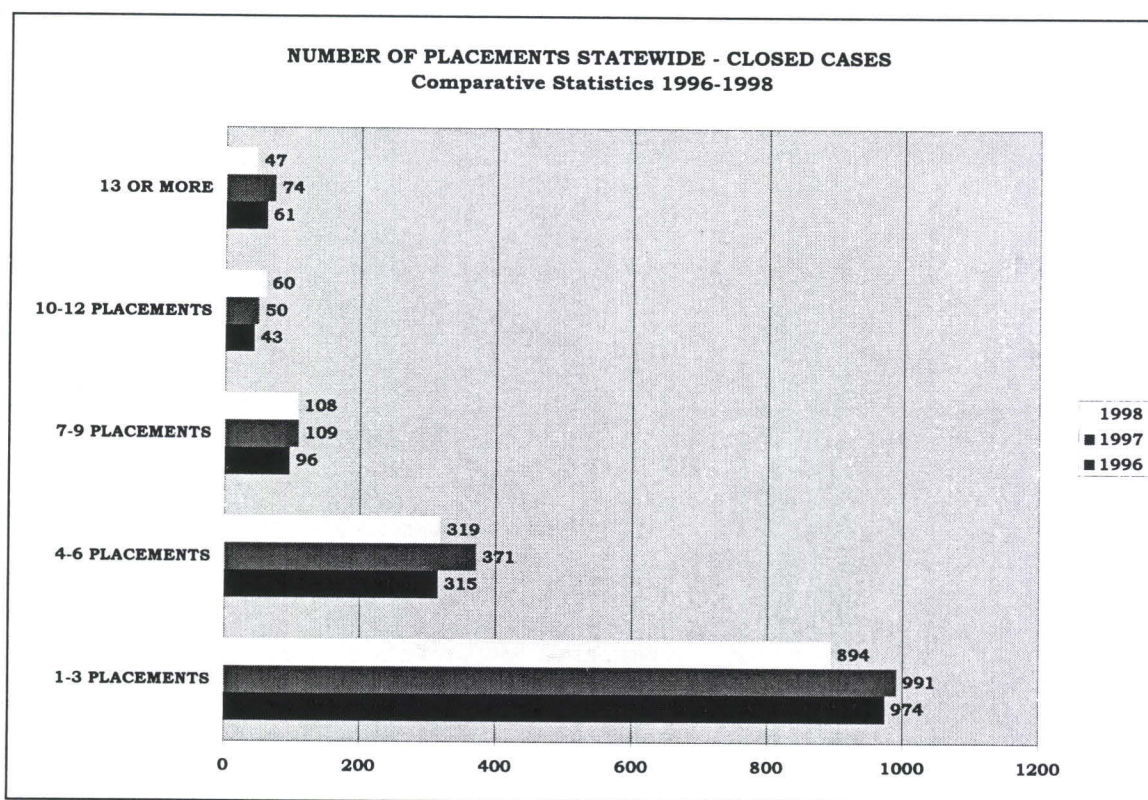
How many placements did children leaving care in 1998 experience?

Children removed from their families and placed in foster care frequently experience more than one placement while in care. Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child and additional moves once in the foster care system can be very detrimental to the child's development. The younger the child, the more critical the need for stability in one home becomes.

Review Board data for 1998 indicates that almost one-third of the children in foster care (30%) experienced between four and nine different foster care placements.

Table J compares the number of placements experienced by children reviewed during 1998. This data indicates that the majority of children in foster care experience between one and three different placements while in foster care.

TABLE J



Where do children go when they leave foster care after being reviewed?

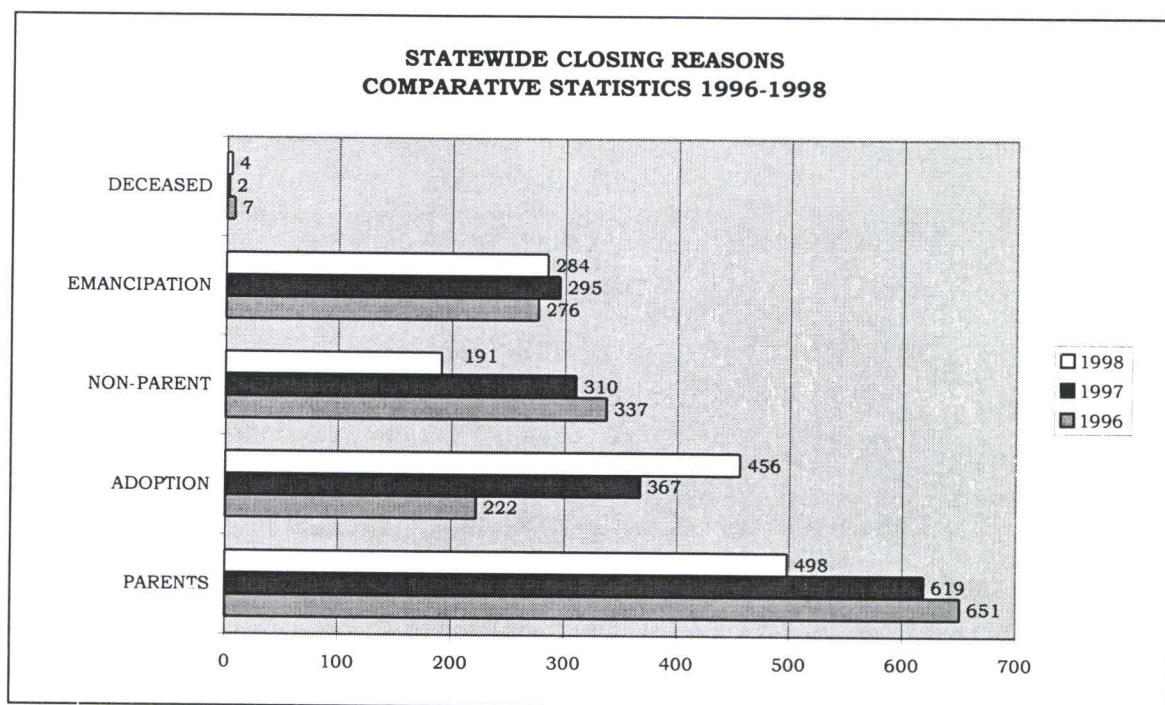
The number of children in the Review Board system who left care in 1998 was 1,433. Thirty-five percent (35%) of these children were returned to their parents. Thirty-two percent (32%) were legally adopted, thirteen percent (13%) had legal custody transferred to relatives or other individuals, four children, less than 1% (<1%), died during 1998 and twenty percent (20%) left the system by emancipation. Less than one percent of those leaving the system during 1998 left for reasons other than the five categories tracked by the Review Board.

Table K compares the number of children in the Review Board data system who left foster care in 1998 to the number of children leaving in each category during 1996 and 1997. Data for 1998 indicates that less than fifty percent (50%) of children who leave

the foster care system are returned home to their birth parents. A slightly larger percentage of children were placed with non-parents, relatives or emancipated than those who were returned home.

Adoption and returning to birth parents are the only two permanent legal plans for children who leave foster care. During 1998, adoption accounted for thirty-two percent (32%) of children leaving the Review Board system. Data for 1998 indicates a nine percent (9%) increase in the percentage of children adopted in each population when comparing 1997 and 1998. A comparison of the number of children adopted between 1997 and 1998 indicates a twenty-one percent (21%) increase.

TABLE K



How long do children stay in the foster care system?

A major goal of foster care review is to achieve a permanent placement for a child as soon as possible; therefore, it is important to measure the length of time a child spends in care. Review Board data for 1998 shows that the average length of time that a child spends in foster care has decreased from 3.10 years in 1988 to 3.2 years in 1998. This is a slight increase from 1997 data that showed 2.9 years as the average length of time spent in foster care. This data applies only to children who were reviewed by the Review Board and who subsequently left the Review Board system. As of December 31, 1998, 1,741 children reviewed had been in foster care over twenty-four months.

It is also important to monitor the length of time that it takes the system to achieve the designated permanent plan for each child. During 1998, 537 of the children who left foster care spent longer than twenty-four months in foster care before their plan was finalized.

Do children return to foster care once they leave?

There is very little longitudinal data to document what happens to children once they leave the foster care system. A closer examination of the reasons that children re-enter the foster care system serves to better indicate the real permanency of placements located for children leaving the system.

Review Board data for 1998 indicates a broad percentage range in the type of disruptions for children reviewed who re-entered foster during 1998. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the children reviewed by local boards who re-entered during 1998 returned to foster care after having been placed with their parents; thirty-eight percent (38%) re-entered after having been placed with a relative or someone who was not their parent; three percent (3%) re-entered care from disrupted adoptive placements; and two percent (2%) re-entered care from other types of placements. This data indicates that the permanent plan of adoption seems to be the most stable plan for children who leave the foster care system.

TABLE L
Placement Disruption Type
Children Entering Foster Care January 1, 1998 - December 31, 1998
and Reviewed by Local Boards

Disruption Type	Frequency	% of Placement Disruptions
Placement w/Parents	128	57%
Placement w/Relatives	85	38%
Adoptive Placement	7	3%
Other Type of Placement	4	2%
TOTAL	224	100%

1998 THERAPEUTIC MEDICAID PLACEMENT DATA

The Division of Foster Care Review operates a quality assurance review system for emotionally disturbed Medicaid eligible children who reside in residential treatment placements. Local review boards who identify concerns about permanent plans for children in therapeutic placements, the quality of treatment, or the appropriateness of a therapeutic placement during their regular review of the child's case, may make a referral to the Medicaid Review Specialist. The Medicaid Review Specialist will then conduct additional inquiries relative to the case and, if necessary, arrange a separate Medicaid staffing with appropriate parties.

The Division of Foster Care Review operates this quality assurance review system for emotionally disturbed Medicaid eligible children who reside in residential treatment placements through a contract with the Department of Health and Human Services. This program has been operational since 1992.

In addition to referrals for local review boards, the Medicaid Review System is involved with other interagency collaborative efforts on behalf of emotionally disturbed children. The Medicaid Review Specialist is a regular participant in a program assistance effort that offers training and technical assistance to private providers who are providing therapeutic services to children. Routine reviews drawn from a sample population of children in select therapeutic placements also are conducted throughout the year.

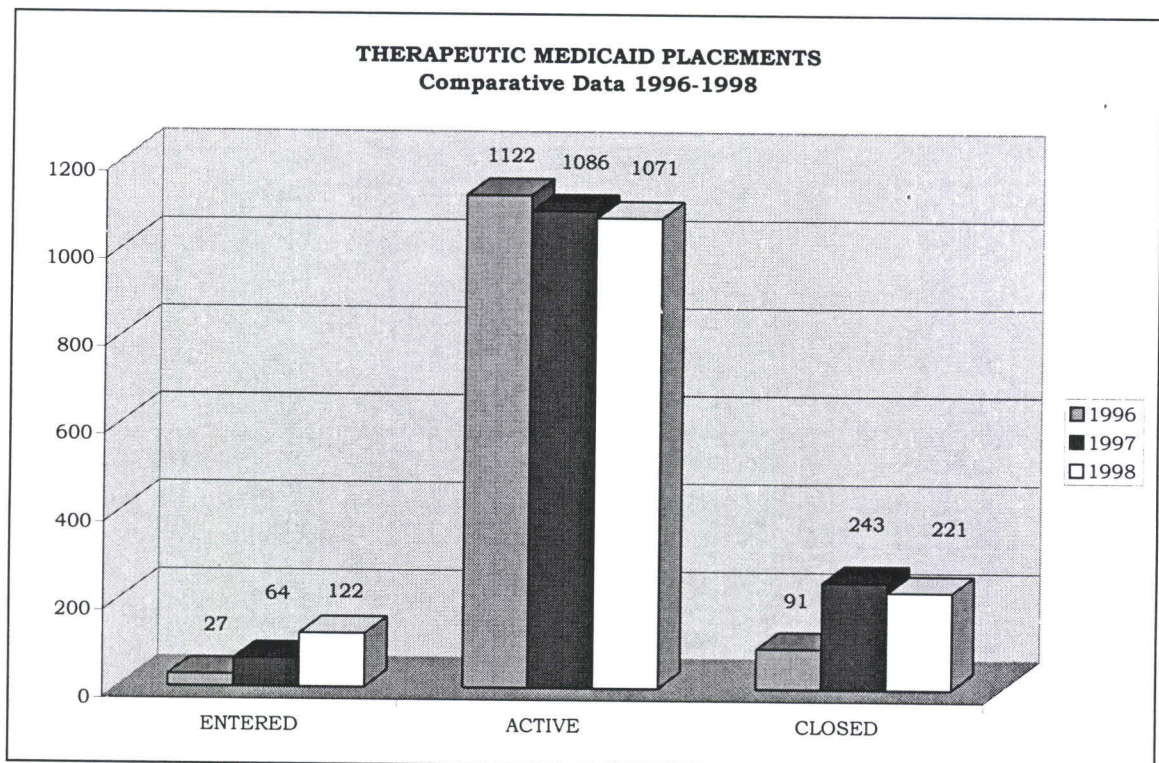
The majority of children in Medicaid funded therapeutic placements are managed by the Managed Treatment Services (MTS) division of the Department of Social Services (DSS). The client to staff ratio is much smaller than that of regular DSS, and MTS staff are trained to work specifically with emotionally disturbed children. These factors allow for more effective and efficient treatment of children in Medicaid funded placements.

The goals of the Medicaid Review System are to: ensure that placement of emotionally disturbed Medicaid eligible children under the age of twenty-one (21) in residential treatment is appropriate; ensure that the level of care provided to each child is offered in the least restrictive environment appropriate to meet the child's treatment needs; make certain that the parties responsible for the care, supervision and treatment of the child regularly communicate with one another and evaluate the child's progress and continuing need for treatment; and, ensure that permanency planning is addressed as a part of the child's therapeutic treatment plan. This system was incorporated into the current structure of the Review Board and provides regular six month review for all children in public foster care residing in therapeutic placements and tracks progress towards achievement of case management goals for each child.

Children in therapeutic placements funded by Medicaid represent twenty-five percent (25%) of the total number of active children reviewed by local boards during 1998. This is a three percent (3%) increase in the total population percentage when compared to 1997 data. During 1998, local review boards conducted a total of 1,985 reviews on a total of 1,071 children residing in Medicaid funded therapeutic placements. While the total number of children reviewed in this category has decreased slightly since 1997, it is significant to note that the overall percentage of children in foster care who fall into this category has increased.

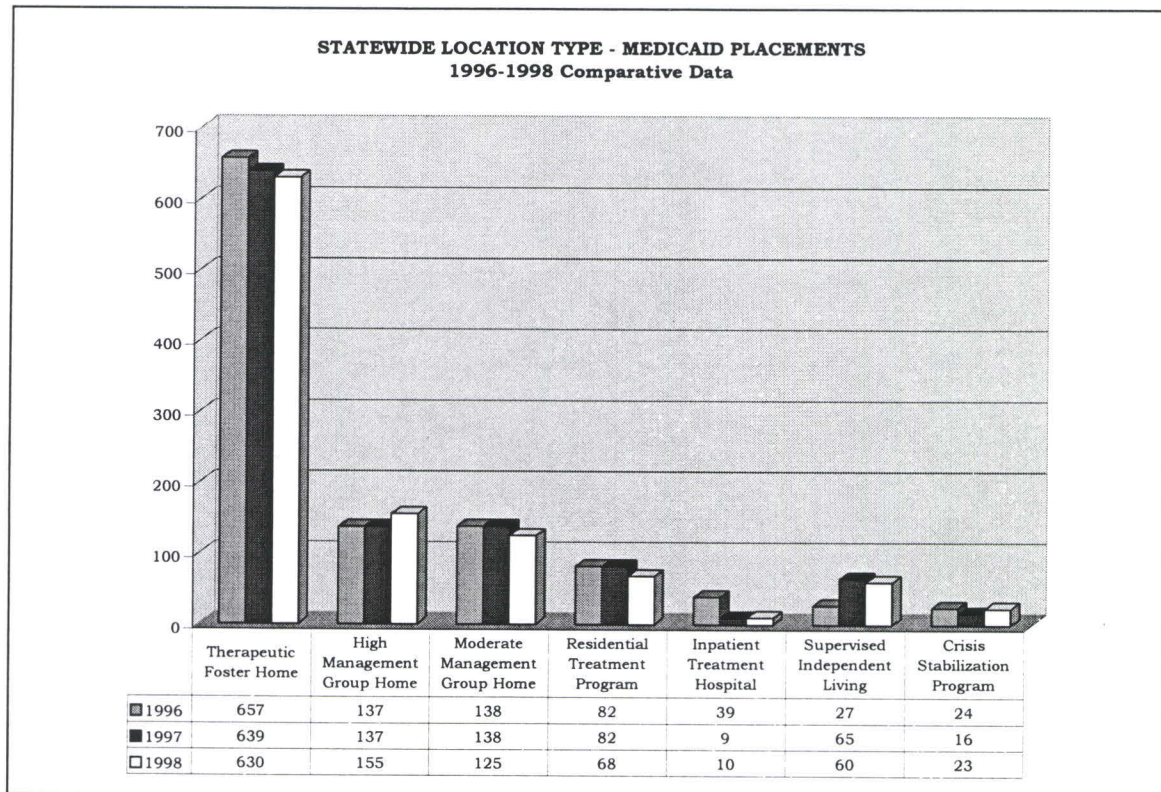
Table M presents data as to the number of children in therapeutic placements who entered care, left care, and remained active during the 1998 time period.

TABLE M



The Review Board monitors children in several different types of therapeutic placements funded by Medicaid. These placements run from the least restrictive therapeutic foster home settings to in-patient hospitalization for severely emotionally disturbed children. Table N describes the number and percentage of children in each of the different types of Medicaid placements tracked by the Review Board. There has been no significant change in the number of children placed in each type of facility when compared to 1997 data.

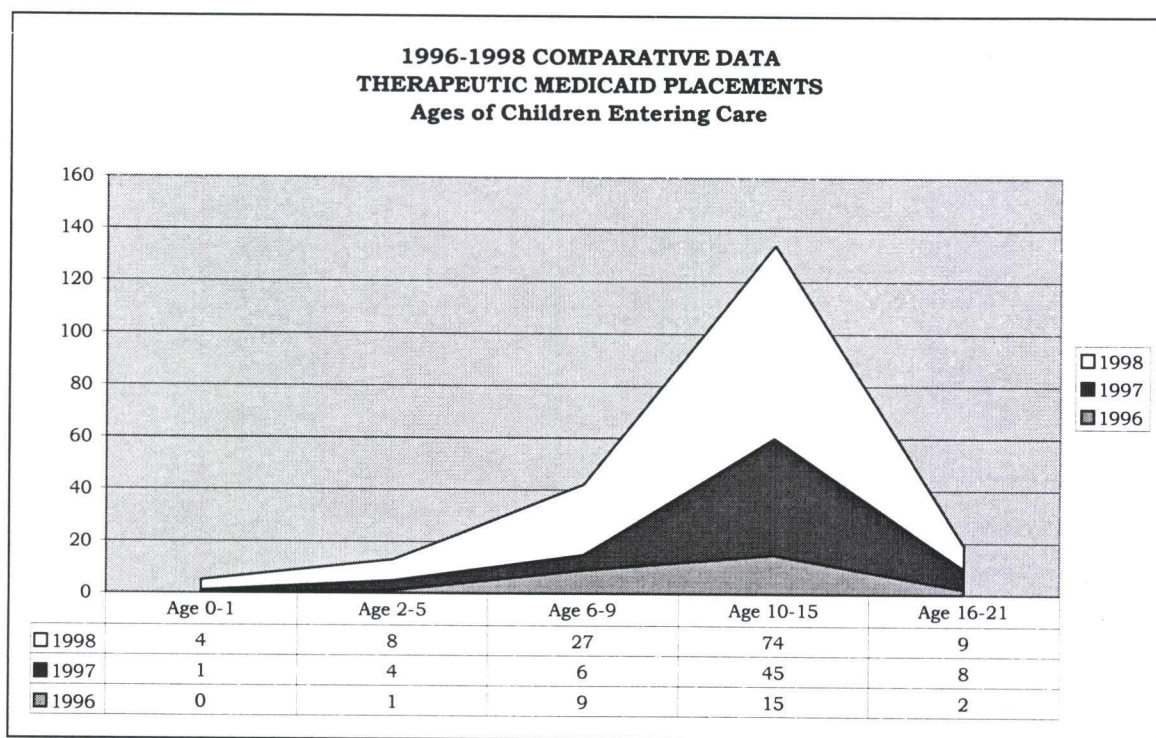
TABLE N



The next three tables (Tables O, P, and Q) compare the number of children in therapeutic placements by selected age groups. Tables present information on the children who were reviewed for the first time by the Review Board, children reviewed by local boards who were active in the foster care population during 1998, and children reviewed who were closed out of the Review Board data system during 1998.

As in the regular foster care population, Table O indicates that the largest number of children who entered the therapeutic population and were added to the Review Board data system are in the ten to fifteen-year-old age bracket. The number of children entering the therapeutic population in this age bracket indicates a sixty-four percent (64%) increase when compared to 1997 data. The most significant statistic in this area is that the number of children who entered the therapeutic population during 1998 in the six to nine-year-old age bracket has more than quadrupled. The comparison of 1997 and 1998 totals reflects a three hundred and fifty percent (350%) increase in this age bracket.

TABLE O



Data presented in Table P indicates that the largest population of active children in the Review Board data system who are in Medicaid therapeutic placements are between the ages of ten and fifteen. This is consistent with Review Board data on children in the regular foster care population.

TABLE P

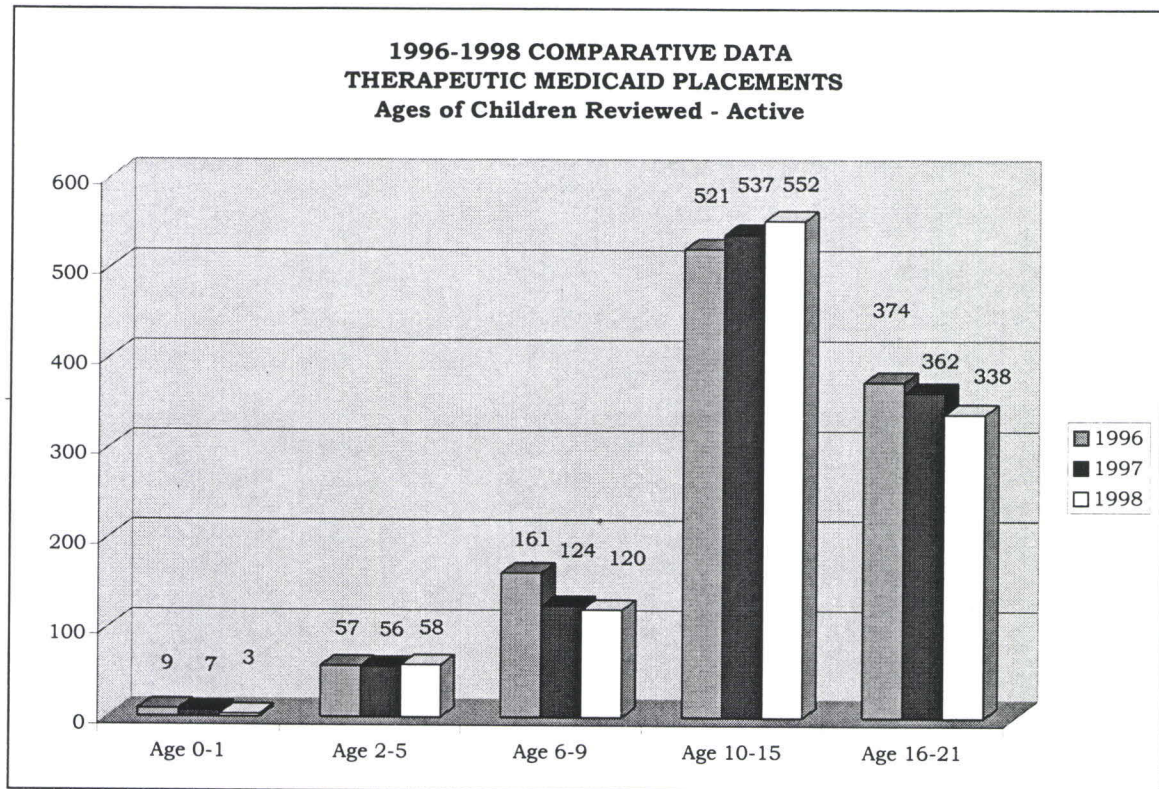
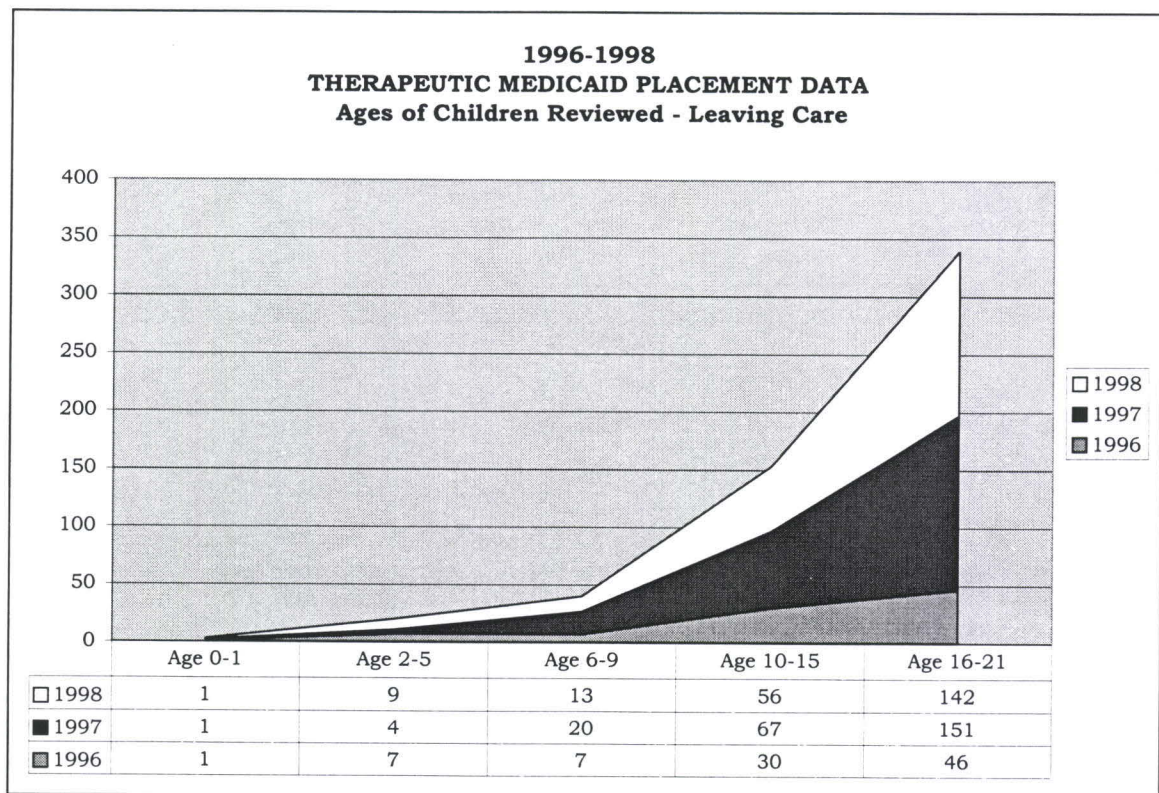


Table Q depicts the age of children in therapeutic placements who left care during 1998 or turned eighteen and were closed out of the Review Board system. When considered as a separate population, the percentage of children who emancipate out of therapeutic placements, fifty percent (50%), is more than double the percentage of the children who emancipate out of the general foster care population which is twenty percent (20%). The overall percentage of children emancipating out of the therapeutic population increased by two percent (2%) when compared to 1997 percentages.

TABLE Q



One difference in the population of children in therapeutic placements when compared to the general foster care population is that there continues to be a higher percentage of males in the active therapeutic population as compared to females. In the general foster care population, the percentage of children of each sex is almost equally balanced. Data for 1998 returns to 1996 patterns of males and females entering therapeutic foster care at almost the same frequency. However, data indicates that there are fourteen percent (14%) more males than females represented in the active therapeutic population.

Table R provides comparative data on the sex of children in therapeutic placements. Comparative data for 1997 and 1998 is outlined in three categories: 1) children entering care who were reviewed for the first time by the Review Board; 2) children active in the Review Board data system; and, 3) children who were reviewed and subsequently closed out of the Review Board data system.

TABLE R

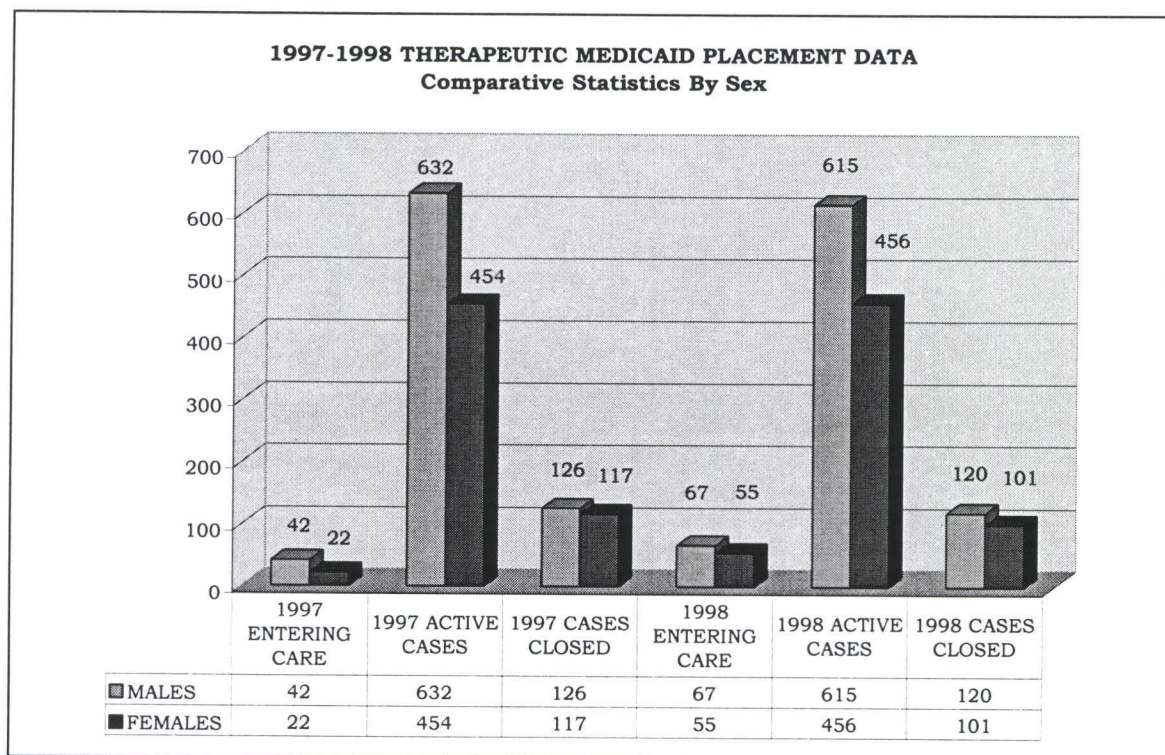
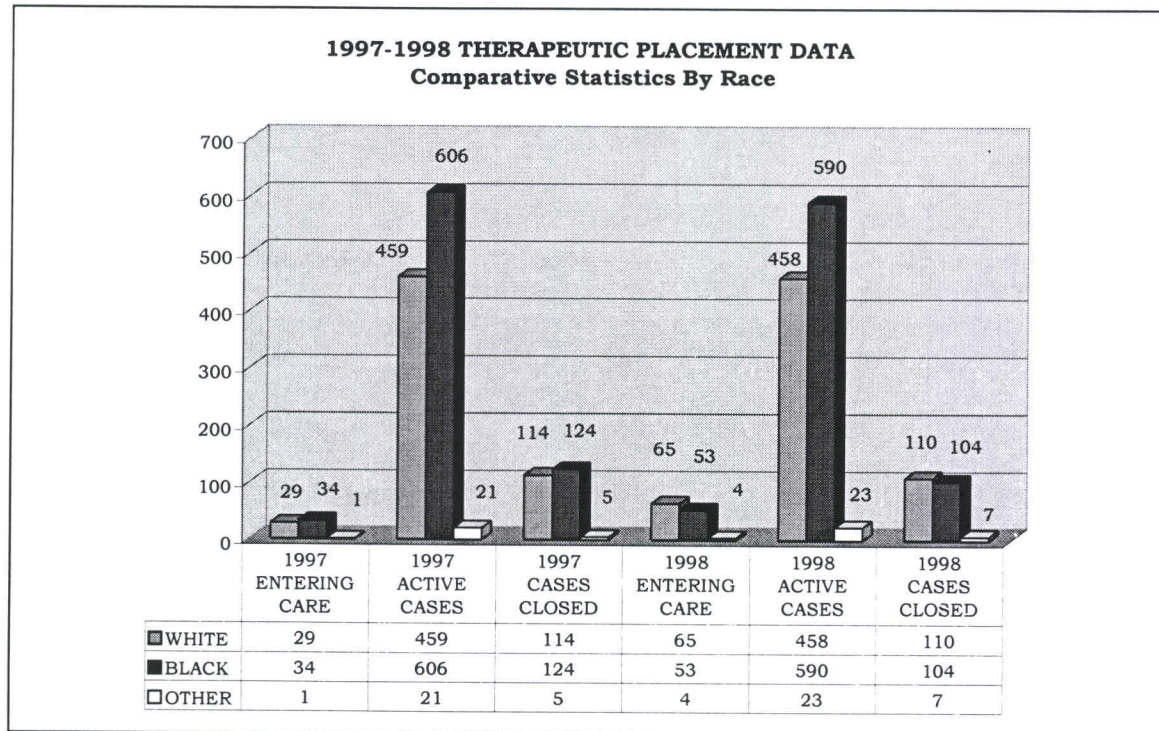


Table S describes the racial breakdown of children in therapeutic placements. This data indicates that fifty-five percent (55%) of the children active in the therapeutic population are black. When compared with the breakdown by sex in Table R, it appears that black males remain active in the therapeutically placed population at a higher rate than females.

TABLE S



The number of foster care placements experienced by children in therapeutic settings must be carefully monitored by those responsible for case management. Any move for a child can have long-lasting, dramatic effects and these effects can be critically compounded when considering a child with emotional problems. Stability should be a primary focus of the treatment process for children in therapeutic settings. These children, more than any others reviewed by the Review Board, will need the security and guidance a permanent family can provide.

Data presented in Table T compares the number of different placements experienced by children in the therapeutic population who left care in 1998 to those experienced in 1997. The number of therapeutically placed children experiencing between four and nine placements has decreased by eight percent (8%) when compared to 1997 numbers. There has also been a slight decrease in the number of children who experience more than ten placements before leaving therapeutic foster care.

Children in therapeutic placements leaving care during 1998 averaged a slightly longer length of time in foster care (3.8 years) than those leaving care in the regular foster care population (3.2 years). The average length of time in foster care for children in therapeutic placements remaining active in the Review Board data system as of December 31, 1998, was already eight months longer than those active children in the regular foster care population.

TABLE T

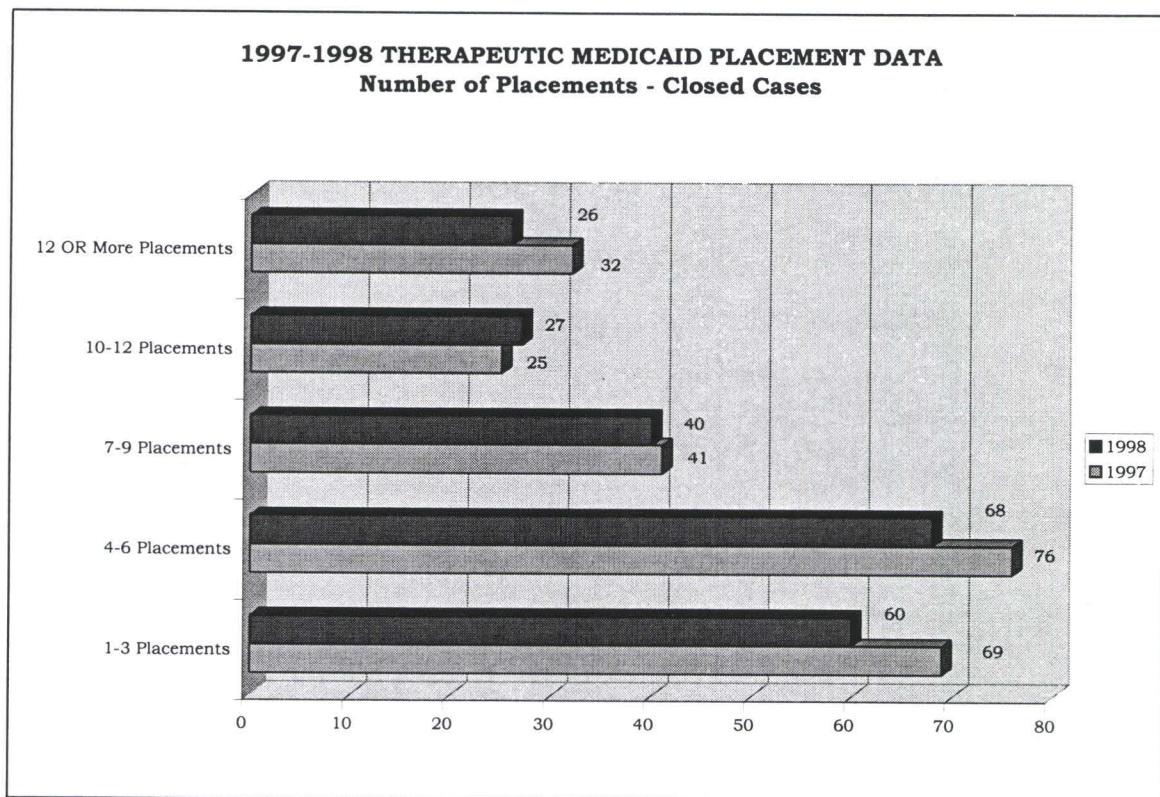


Table U compares the reasons children in therapeutic placements were closed out of the Review Board's system during 1996, 1997 and 1998. The overall percentage of the population returning to their parents from therapeutic placements in 1998 was thirty-five percent (35%), which is equal to the percentage of children in the general foster care population who returned to their parents.

Review Board data for 1998 indicates that fifteen (15) children in therapeutic placements left the foster care system to be placed in adoptive homes. Adoptive placement represents seven percent (7%) of the reasons that children left this population during 1998. This is the first year that Review Board data has reflected permanent, adoptive placements for children in this population.

The data also indicates that the 111 children in therapeutic placements who closed out of the Review Board system due to emancipation represent fifty percent (50%) of the children closed in this population during 1998. In the general foster care population, twenty percent (20%) of the children left care due to emancipation. Emancipation continues to be the most frequent reason children leave therapeutic placement.

TABLE U

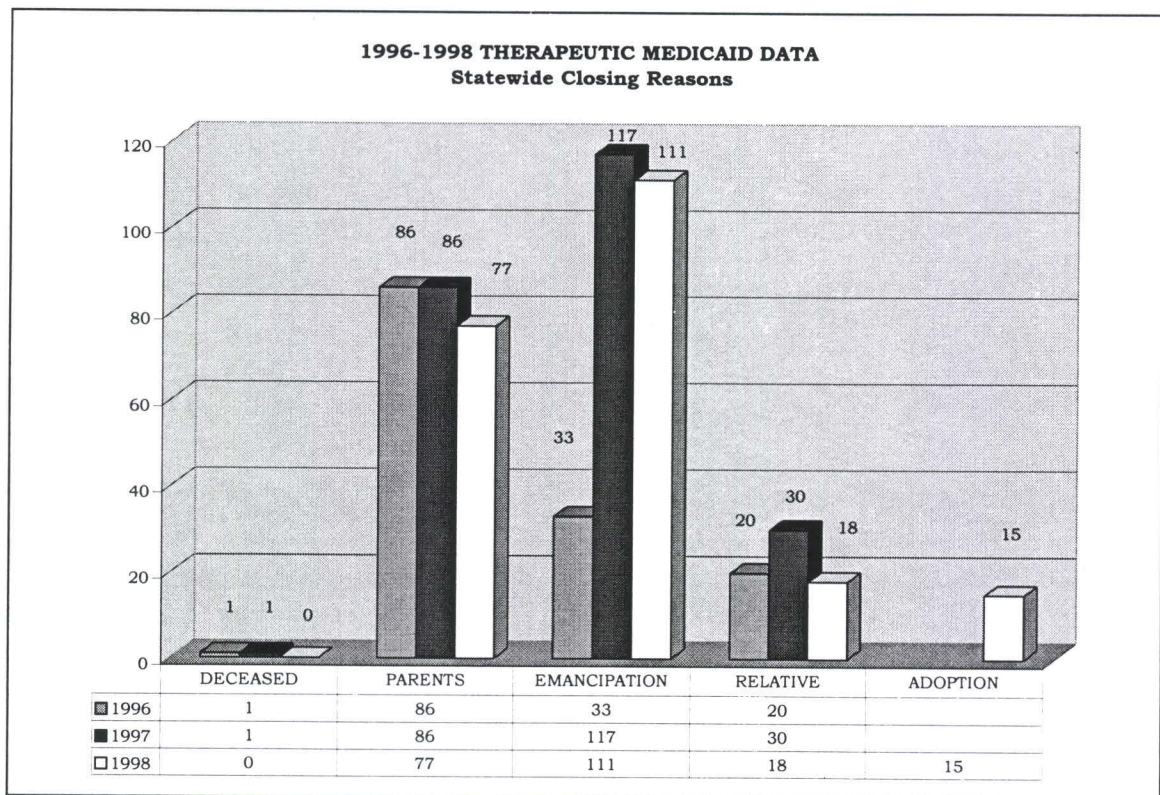


Table V describes the number of therapeutic Medicaid placements in each county and Area Adoption Region. Union County had the highest percentage of children in therapeutic placements during 1998 (100%) and Lee County reviewed no children in therapeutic placement during 1998.

TABLE V

THERAPEUTIC PLACEMENT BY COUNTY
January 1, 1998 - December 31, 1998

COUNTY	#Children Reviewed	#Children Reviewed in TP	% Children in TP	COUNTY	#Children Reviewed	#Children Reviewed in TP	% Children in TP
ABBEVILLE	15	0	0%	GREENWOOD	55	16	29%
AIKEN	178	59	33%	HAMPTON	18	-	0%
ALLENDALE	18	1	6%	HORRY	168	69	41%
ANDERSON	200	64	33%	JASPER	2	-	0%
BAMBERG	24	6	25%	KERSHAW	40	12	30%
BARNWELL	29	14	48%	LANCASTER	48	14	29%
BEAUFORT	82	33	40%	LAURENS	43	9	21%
BERKELEY	147	44	30%	LEE	23	-	0%
CALHOUN	19	4	21%	LEXINGTON	108	43	40%
CHARLESTON	360	106	30%	MARION	52	7	14%
CHEROKEE	36	15	42%	MARLBORO	33	9	27%
CHESTER	53	20	38%	MCCORMICK	8	3	38%
CHESTERFIELD	50	22	44%	NEWBERRY	39	21	54%
CLARENDON	49	12	25%	OCONEE	92	9	10%
COLLETON	57	6	11%	ORANGEBURG	81	25	31%
DARLINGTON	43	10	23%	PICKENS	56	21	38%
DILLON	30	7	23%	RICHLAND	498	141	28%
DORCHESTER	59	16	27%	SALUDA	19	7	37%
EDGEFIELD	34	8	24%	SPARTANBURG	249	70	28%
FAIRFIELD	26	7	27%	SUMTER	119	9	8%
FLORENCE	120	24	20%	UNION	5	3	60%
GEORGETOWN	34	5	15%	WILLIAMSBURG	25	3	12%
GREENVILLE	312	80	26%	YORK	122	40	33%
REGION I	58	9	16%	REGION V	80	10	13%
REGION II	115	15	13%	REGION VI	247	23	9%
REGION III	138	15	11%	REGION VII	207	11	5%
REGION IV	213	9	4%				

The Medicaid Quality Assurance System conducted follow-up staffings on seventy-five children in Medicaid funded therapeutic placements during 1998. Of the children reviewed during these staffings, the Medicaid Review Specialist determined that ninety-seven percent (97%) required residential (therapeutic) treatment services, eighty-seven percent (87%) were placed in settings where they were receiving the appropriate level and intensity of care they required and seventy-two percent (72%) were in placements appropriate for their needs.¹³

Another function of the Medicaid Quality Assurance Review System is to track areas of concern identified during Medicaid staffings. These Areas of Concern are noted for the purpose of focusing on problems which may impede and/or adversely affect the treatment of children in Medicaid funded therapeutic placement and/or result in the recoupment of Medicaid funding. The different Areas of Concern tracked by the Medicaid Quality Assurance Review System are as follows:

Communication - A lack of communication or coordination exists between members of a child's treatment team which may include: 1) the Department of Social Services caseworker or case manager; 2) the therapist; 3) the therapeutic foster parent(s); 4) the child; 5) the treating physician; and, 6) if appropriate, the Continuum of Care service coordinator.

Delivery of Services - A delay or lack of implementation of therapeutic interventions has been identified in the child's treatment plan.

Discharge/Transitional Planning - There has been no development and/or implementation of an appropriate plan when preparing to discharge a child from a therapeutic program.

Monitoring/Medication - Failure to have a physician routinely and appropriately monitor the administration of medication for a child in a therapeutic setting.

Permanency Planning - There is no identification of a permanent plan by the treatment team working as the child's case managers.

Treatment Plan - No treatment plan has been developed for the child, or there is a treatment plan that fails to support the need for the identified level of care or the need for treatment services. The format of the treatment plan may be inappropriate, or the treatment plan is generic and not child-specific.

Visitation - There is insufficient visitation or contacts between the child and family members or significant others where appropriate.

Other - Refers to any problem which may adversely affect treatment services not otherwise identified.

Table W compares the frequency and percentages of Areas of Concern identified during Medicaid staffings during 1997 and 1998. The most significant increases indicated by this data were in the categories of delivery of services and treatment planning.

¹³ Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent. In some cases, information received was insufficient to make accurate assessments on several children from each category.

TABLE W
COMPARATIVE STATISTICS - MEDICAID REVIEW AREAS OF CONCERN
JANUARY 1, 1998 - DECEMBER 31, 1998

AREA OF CONCERN	1997 Frequency	1998 Frequency	1997 % of Concerns	1998 % of Concerns
1) Permanency Planning	23	13	25%	17%
2) Treatment Planning	30	30	33%	40%
3) Other	0	0	0%	0%
4) Delivery of Services	3	13	3%	17%
5) Communication	21	12	23%	17%
6) Visitation	9	4	10%	5%
7) Discharge/Transition Planning	3	2	3%	3%
8) Monitoring Medication	2	1	2%	1%
TOTALS	91	75	100%	100%

IN CONCLUSION - A WORD FROM THE CHILDREN

The most important players in the child welfare system are seldom heard. What do the children think? How do the children feel? Again this year, the Division of Foster Care Review wants to give the children a chance to be heard. Several of the following articles and artwork are reprinted from South Carolina YOUTH Connected, a publication of the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

MERRY GO ROUND

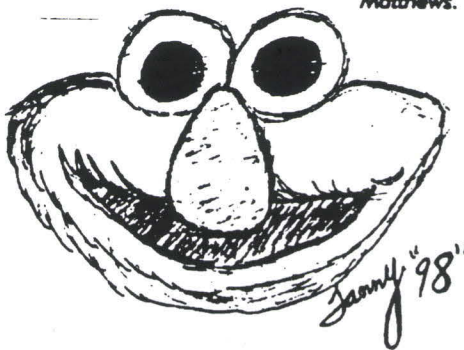
My life has been like a merry go round
No place to stay always moving around
Wondering, wondering does anybody care?
I'm always feeling that life isn't fair

Can someone tell me what's going to happen to me?
I find myself worrying - does anybody see?
My life has been full of heartbreak and fear
Wondering, wondering - does anybody hear?

When I grow up what will I be?
My life certainly makes no sense to me
Living my life in confusion was never the plan
It's gotten so bad that sometimes I ran

Please let my life get better, I pray
Searching each day that God will show me the way
Meanwhile, will someone help me get unwound
And stop my life on this merry go round

By Kristan, 17 years old



Elmo's Smile

Elmo's smile was always a funny smile to me. When I was a child, I never knew when he was happy or sad 'cause of his smile. That's how my smile was when I came in DSS custody, like Elmo's smile. I didn't know whether to be happy or sad 'cause of all the changes.

Franteria, 17 years old

When I Grow Up

by Cameika H.

When I grow up, I would like to visit and talk to all of the foster parents I have stayed with. I also would like to find many of my brothers and sisters.

But for now, I'd like to say I'm happy.

I was adopted by my foster parents on January 20, 1998. I live with them in St. Matthews. I get anything I want and very seldom do I long to visit my biological mother.

Even though I haven't begun yet to think fully about life, I have decided that I will be an architect when I grow up. I also will be a public speaker. I will tell people about my life as a foster child and try to influence people never to give up their kids.

My mom couldn't take care of me because she did not have a stable job and house for me or my brother.

When I grow up, I will take care of my kids if I have any because I don't want people growing up wondering why they're not with their biological parents.

Cameika H. is a 13-year-old who lives in St. Matthews.



Dear Mother and Father,

You abandoned me when I was younger, and I had to take the responsibility of taking care of your children. I had no time to be a child. I was an adult most of my youth. I also did not get enough of my educational needs met because I had to stay home because you were too busy getting drunk or high.

I feel that my love was taken for granted. I wish that you, as my parents, had taken responsibility and listened to some of the people who love you dearly. I miss you.

Crystal F., 17 years old

Love

by Shaq #45

Love is a gamble.
Love is a game.
Boys get you pregnant,
And you take the blame.

Two weeks of suffering,
Nine months of pain,
Two days in the hospital
And a baby to name.

He'll call you cute.
He'll call you fine.
But when the baby comes out,
He'll say it's not mine.

Shaq #45 is 15 years old. She lives at Epworth Children's Home in Columbia.



Illustration by Michelle

People

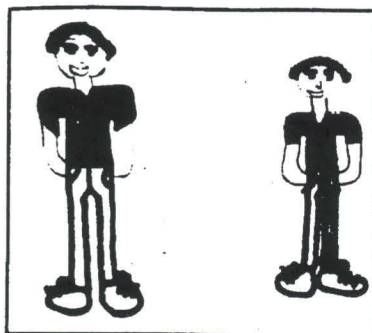
by Little Engine

There are short people,
tall people,
thin people,
big people.

There are caring people,
people who hate.

But for all kind of people
you meet, you should
always love people.

Little Engine is a 16-year-old who lives in Marlboro County.



"My Brothers"

by Tosha

"My brothers are important to me because they are the only family I have," Tosha says. "I have had them around me where I could love them."

500 printed, \$2.99 each. Total cost = \$1,495.00